

No. 596

MARCH 2, 1917

SIX Cents

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF

BOYS THAT MAKE MONEY.

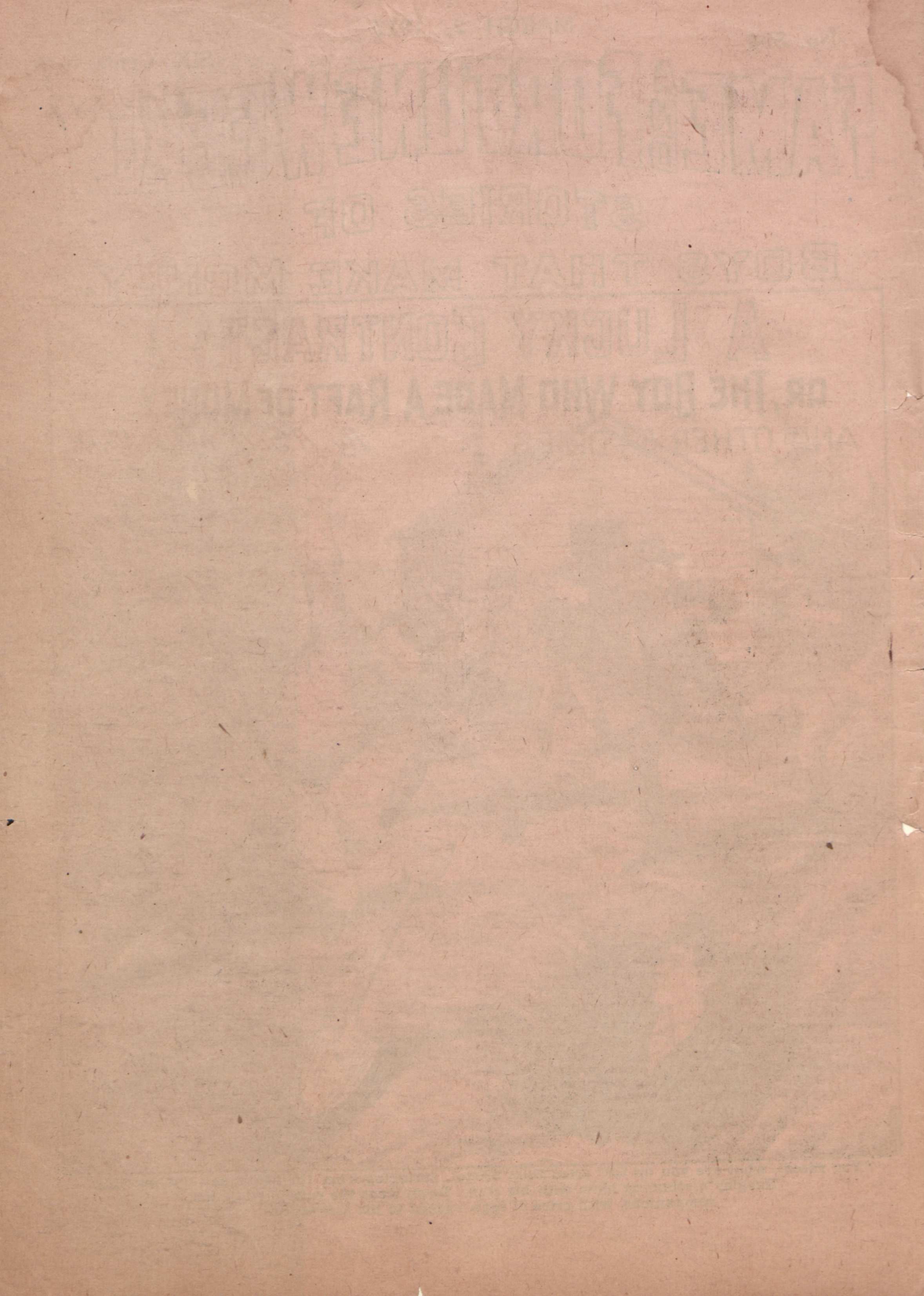
A LUCKY CONTRACT;
OR, THE BOY WHO MADE A RAFT OF MONEY.

AND OTHER STORIES

By A SELF-MADE MAN.



"You rascal, what are you up to?" cried Dick Bristol, springing from the hedge and dealing Bill Hoogley a stunning blow with his club. Down went the ruffian, while his companions, with cries of rage, rushed to his assistance.



FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$3.00 per year. Entered at the New York, N. Y., Post Office as Second-Class Matter by Frank Tousey, Publisher, 168 West 23d Street, New York.

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NEW YORK, MARCH 2, 1917.

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A LUCKY CONTRACT

—OR—

THE BOY WHO MADE A RAFT OF MONEY

By A SELF-MADE MAN.

CHAPTER I.

TOM TROWBRIDGE AND DICK BRISTOL.

"Well, if this isn't a blamed shame!" exclaimed Tom Trowbridge to his chum, Dick Bristol, as the pair, with fishing-poles and lines in their hands, came to a stop at a point of a wide tidewater creek where a wooden bridge, erected and used by the Englewood & Preston Trolley Company, spanned the stream.

"It's an outrage!" coincided Dick.

"Talk about greedy corporations," said Tom, with a look of disgust, "I think this trolley company is the limit."

"It goes way beyond the limit. The idea of removing six or eight feet of the ties from this end, placing a triangle of boards plentifully smeared with grease over the stringer, and a slanting board, treated in a like manner, against the rail, so a person can't cross the creek except by paying a nickel for that privilege."

"It's a low down trick," growled Tom, looking at the obstructions.

"You bet it is. I'll wager Deacon Fitch is responsible for this move. He's a mean old hunk, though he's the richest man around here, and lives in the finest house, Major Nutte's excepted, this side of Preston."

"I wouldn't be surprised but you're right, Dick. It's too bad the trolley company has such a man for its president."

"That can't be helped, for the deacon owns a controlling interest in the stock."

"I guess the reason the company has put this job up on the public is to prevent the summer visitors from walking between Englewood Beach and North Beach. Lots of them did it last year, not because they wanted to save a nickel carfare, but because the walk alongshore, in the afternoon and around sundown, is an invigorating exercise. The places are only a mile apart. Heretofore any one could cross this bridge by the footboard, but this trick of the trolley company cuts walkers off completely from the other side of the creek. Whenever an Englewood visitor wants to take a short cut to North Beach after this he'll have to cough up a nickel and cut out the walk, which is the best part of the trip. And the same thing applies to those North Beach people who want to walk over to Englewood or the beach."

"That's right," nodded Dick.

"If this corporation's right-of-way is such a secret franchise the county ought to build a small footbridge across the creek at this point and restore to the citizen the right to walk if he wants to," said Tom.

"The deacon's political pull is strong enough, I guess, to prevent the authorities from carrying out any such public improvement."

"The deacon is a hog, then. He seems to want everything in sight."

"Deacon Fitch isn't the only one who wants the earth, or a large section of it."

"That's no lie. His son Herbert is very like him."

"That dude gives me a pain. One would think he owned Englewood, by the way he struts about, just like a turkey gobbler."

"When a boy's father is cock-of-the-walk, like Deacon Fitch, he's apt to make capital for himself out of the fact."

"Jimmy Dunn, of Preston, isn't built that way, and his father could buy and sell Deacon Fitch twice over," said Dick.

"Jimmy is a first-class chap," admitted Tom.

"Bet your life he is. Well, how are we going to get across the creek now without taking that car that's coming on behind us?"

"Give it up. I'm not going to pay a nickel for the privilege of getting over sixty feet of water."

"Me, either. It would be just the same if the distance were only a dozen feet."

"If somebody would come along with a boat," said Tom, "that would solve the difficulty."

"Or a balloon," chuckled Dick.

Here the trolley car came gliding up.

The motorman slowed down, thinking perhaps the boys wanted to get aboard so as to reach the other side of the creek.

There was a broad, malicious kind of grin on his face that made Tom and Dick hot under the collar.

"This is a fine trick for your company to play on the public!" snorted Tom.

"Want to ride across?" chuckled the man.

"Sure, we want to ride, as we can't walk," said Dick, jumping on the front platform.

"Here, you're not going to put up a nickel just to cross the creek!" cried Tom, in astonishment.

"Jump on, Tom," was all the answer his chum got back.

As the car started to move on again, Tom, much against his will, jumped aboard.

"This will cost you ten cents," he growled to his companion. "I won't pay a cent for a sixty-foot ride."

"Don't you worry. The motorman invited us to ride across, so it won't cost us a cent," grinned Dick.

"I invited you!" replied the man. "You must think I want to lose my job?"

"You asked us if we wanted to ride across, didn't you? Well, we wanted to ride across and accepted your invitation. The company wouldn't think of charging us ten cents to take us sixty feet."

"Fares," said the conductor, coming to the door. "You'll have to step inside. Nobody is permitted to ride on the front platform."

A LUCKY CONTRACT.

"What! are you charging to carry us across this old bridge?" asked Dick, in well-assumed surprise, for the car had reached the other side by this time. "What a nerve you've got! Jump off, Tom. We're not going any further."

The two boys leaped off and gave the conductor the laugh.

"That's where we got back at the deacon," chuckled Dick, as the car continued on its way. "Now we'll go on to our fishing grounds."

They shouldered their poles and proceeded on their way in high glee at having tricked their way across the bridge.

"The summer visitors will be as mad as thunder over this hold-up at the creek," said Tom, as they walked along.

"You bet they will; but the deacon won't care how mad they get as long as he harvests their nickels."

"There won't be near as much walking done as there has been."

"The summer people can do their walking on their own side of the creek. They don't have to cross over."

"I wish I knew of some way to balk the trolley company," said Tom.

"There isn't any way except by building a foot-bridge, and if the county won't do that nobody else is likely to."

"I'll tell you what we might do," said Tom, suddenly struck with an idea.

"What?"

"Get a small flat-boat and hire a kid to pole the people back and forth for a penny each."

"That isn't a bad scheme, if the boy was honest enough to turn in all the cash he took in."

"Widow Dooley's son, Mike, would be glad to take the job, and he's as honest as the day is long. He's doing nothing now. We could give him half of what he takes in. The main idea is to queer the trolley company."

"Where could we get a flat-boat?"

"I know where I could get the loan of one for nothing."

"That's cheap enough. I've got a good mind to stand in with you. We needn't let on that it's our scheme. We'll put Mickey on to it and get the boat for him. We can have the boat painted red, white and blue so it will look attractive."

"And put a small flag-pole in front on which we'll hoist a white banner with the words 'Down with monopoly' painted on it. At the end of the summer season we'll present Mike's mother with our share of the profits in a lump sum. She's poor, and it will come in handy to help tide her over the winter."

"Well, I'm with you. I hope it won't cost much to start the ferry, for I'm not a bloated capitalist."

"Oh, five dollars ought to float the ferry company. That's two and a half each. You can stand that, can't you?"

"I guess so."

"All right. I'll start the ball rolling when we get back. Well, here we are at our fishing ground. I'll bet you a nickel I catch the first shiner."

"I take you," said Dick, beginning to bait his hooks in a hurry so as to get the first catch.

Tom and Dick lived in adjoining cottages in the village of Englewood, which was about half a mile from Englewood Beach, a popular summer resort on the shore of a big bay which made in from Lake Michigan.

Tom was an orphan who made his home with his aunt, a widow in very modest circumstances.

For the past year he had been employed as time-keeper and general office hand at the Englewood Wagon Works.

Owing to business stagnation, due to general money stringency, the establishment had shut down for the summer on the previous Saturday, and so Tom was now out of a job.

Dick had been working for the same company in one of the workrooms, and was out of a position for the same cause.

His mother was also a widow, and he had an older sister who was employed in the one millinery and fancy goods store of Englewood.

The fact that the two boys were out of work was bound to make a difference in the internal economy of both households.

Tom, however, wasn't worrying over the matter as yet.

He was a smart, enterprising lad, and had every confidence in his ability to make his way ahead in the world.

He was not a boy who meant to work for other people any longer than he could help.

His ambition was to have a business of his own—not a

small, one-horse business, such as many people are contented to plod along in, but something in which he could see large profits.

Every time almost that he passed the residence of Deacon Fitch he mentally told himself that some day he would own a mansion as fine, or even finer than that.

More than once he had mentioned his hopes and expectations to his aunt, whom he thought the world of, for she had raised him from a small boy and had been as good as a mother to him; and she, worthy little woman, sympathized with and encouraged his ambitious ideas.

She thought that there wasn't a smarter, nor better boy in the world than Tom, and prophesied great things for him in the future.

If there was one recreation the boys liked more than another it was to go fishing together.

While waiting for the finny inhabitants of the bay to bite they could talk over plans and schemes that were always cropping up in their brains.

Dick had ambitious notions about his future, also, but they were all associated with Tom.

Some day he expected to go into partnership with his chum in some enterprise, or at least to be his manager or superintendent.

And so, whenever the two boys were together, they amused themselves building all kinds of castles in the air which seemed pretty real to them at the time.

CHAPTER II.

TOM INTIMATES HOW HE COULD MAKE A RAFT OF MONEY.

"Hurrah!" shouted Dick, in great glee, as he yanked a silvery object out of the water and landed it on shore. "I've caught the first fish. Come up with your nickel, Tom."

"You're lucky. Here's the coin," and Tom handed over a five-cent piece.

"I knew I'd do you," chuckled Dick, as he rebaited his hook and cast his line in again.

"You didn't know anything about it. You only took the same chance I did. Here, I've got a fish now myself. You didn't get so far ahead of me after all."

"I got far enough ahead to win the nickel."

"You'll need it when you come to cross the trolley bridge again. We're not likely to work that trick twice on the same afternoon."

"Why not? It's easy."

"The motorman and the conductor will probably put the other men up to the dodge, and we'll get left if we try it."

"The trolley company has no right to maroon us on this side of the creek."

"What does the trolley company care for us?"

"We have rights, haven't we?"

"Not on that bridge. The trolley people heretofore permitted the public to use the footboard as a privilege at their own risk. From the present look of things they have cut the privilege out. Now, the public have the choice of three things—they can pay a nickel, or swim, or walk to the head of the creek and come around that way. That's the whole thing in a nutshell."

"The people of Englewood ought to get an injunction against the trolley company."

"On what grounds?"

"The county presented the franchise to the company. As it was a gift, the people ought to have some rights that the company should respect."

"Did you ever hear of a corporation that had any gratitude? They take all they can get, and return as little as they can. The people who own the stock want their dividends regularly. If the company makes too much money on its original investment, the stockholders get together and water the stock so that their profits may not appear to be too large."

"What do you mean by watering the stock?"

"Oh, they increase the issue. If there are 50,000 shares out on which the profits warrant a twelve per cent. dividend, they increase the issue to 100,000, then the dividend will be reduced to six per cent. But as each stockholder receives an extra share for every share he already owns he gets the twelve per cent. anyway."

"What difference can it make if he does get twelve or fifty per cent. as long as the company earns it?" asked Dick, rather puzzled to understand just why stock should be watered in order to apparently reduce its income.

"Well, if a gas company is known to be making an extra profit on its invested capital, the customers have good grounds for demanding a lower rate per thousand feet, and if a street car company is making huge returns on a five-cent fare the public have a right to expect that the company should reduce the fare to three cents. So, one of the operations of high finance is to keep the outsiders from knowing too much about what is going on inside."

But Dick had another bite, and for the time being he lost interest in the subject of high finance.

While he was unhooking the fish Tom got a bite, too, and gave his attention to landing his catch.

When the boys threw their lines in again Tom did not have anything further to say on the late topic, and his chum did not ask him to resume it.

When Tom did speak again it was on an entirely different subject.

"If I had a thousand dollars, Dick, I believe I could make a raft of money," he said, with a thoughtful look.

"If you had a thousand dollars you could make a raft of money?" repeated his chum, in a tone of surprise.

"That's what I said."

"How could you do it?"

"Do you know the Locke Farm, up the river?"

"I guess I do. Everybody around here knows that lemon. It's been on the market for years at about a third of the price per acre that any other farmer values his land in that neighborhood, but though a hundred strangers have during that time looked at what appeared to be a bargain-counter sale, not one would touch it with a ten-foot pole after a good squint at it. What about it?"

"Locke will sell it for \$20 an acre, cash."

"I wouldn't give him twenty cents an acre for it if I had to go out there and try to make a living off it."

"There are fifty acres altogether, and \$1,000 will buy it."

"That's what his advertisement says, but nobody but a blind man will ever buy it at that price, and to my mind nobody but a fool at any price."

"Why not?" asked Tom, a bit sharply.

"Because it's no good."

"Why isn't it any good?"

"Oh, come off! You know as well as I do why it isn't any good. Because it's about as stony a piece of ground as you could find anywhere on earth. It's long and narrow, and forms practically the whole of the outer farce of the bluff. Since Locke had to part with the only really salable part of his original farm he hasn't been able to raise enough fodder on those fifty acres to feed his horse and cow, let alone himself and his family. If he offered it for \$5 an acre I doubt if he'd be able to find a purchaser."

"That so?" replied Tom, in a tone that Dick construed to be tantalizing.

"Yes, that's so."

"You're wrong."

"All right. Have it your own way. You seem to know everything."

"If I had \$1,000 I'd take it off his hands."

"Yes, you would. I think I see you doing it," replied Dick, jeeringly.

"I tell you I would," said Tom, positively.

Dick stared at his chum in a puzzled way.

"Say, what kind of a jolly are you giving me?" he asked.

"No jolly at all. I mean what I say."

"Excuse me if I doubt your word. Nobody but a chump would give half a thousand dollars for that farm as it stands, and I've never taken you for a chump yet."

"I should hope that I wasn't a chump. And it's for that reason I'd give Locke his price in double quick time if I had the coin."

"Do you fancy there's a gold mine under those rocks?"

"I know there's a gold mine in those 'rocks,' as you call it."

"You'll have to explain, for your meaning is all Greek to me."

"Wait a moment till I pull this fish in," and Tom landed his third beauty.

"Well," said Dick, "go on. I'm interested in your reason for believing that the Locke farm is worth \$1,000."

"It's worth a good deal more than that, or, rather, it will be before long. In fact, whether you believe I'm a prophet

or not, Locke will get his price for those fifty acres before he's three months older."

"Who will give it to him?"

"That is a question I can't answer."

"What makes you think that farm is, or will be, worth more than \$1,000?"

"Because I found out something the other day that will have a very important bearing on the Ste. Marie River and the neighborhood near the Locke Farm."

"Oh, you did?"

Tom nodded mysteriously.

"What was it you found out?"

"That is one of my business secrets, Dick."

"Which means that you don't intend to tell me," replied Dick, in an aggrieved tone.

"Not this afternoon. Later, perhaps. Look out, I think you've got a bite!"

Dick found he had, and landed a fish just as Tom pulled in his fourth.

"It's a mean thing to excite a fellow's curiosity and then leave him on the ragged edge," growled Dick.

"Well, I'll tell you this much: The outcroppings on the Locke Farm show that the rock is practically all limestone."

"What of it?"

"A limestone quarry is a good thing to own if you don't have to carry the stuff too far to market."

"It isn't much good on the Locke Farm, for there isn't a railroad station within fifteen or twenty miles where it could be shipped. Look what a haul it would be. It wouldn't pay to ship it."

"Correct. Otherwise Locke could have sold his fifty acres long ago."

"Then what good is the rock if you can't turn it into money?"

"It can, and before long will, be turned into good money by some lucky chap."

"How will it?"

"That's part of my business secret."

"Say, you're mighty aggravating this afternoon. If you weren't my chum I'd tell you what I think of you."

"Go on and tell, if it will make you feel any better. You won't hurt my feelings."

"No, I'd rather not. I think we'd better change the subject, anyway."

"Just as you say. I'm through."

The boys fished in silence a while, each catching a couple more fish.

"What are we going to do all summer, Tom?" asked Dick at length. "We can't afford to loaf around. At least, I can't."

"I know where you can get a good job until the first of September."

"Where?"

"At the Bay View Hotel. The proprietor is looking for an assistant to help old Captain Blakeley take care of the bath houses. I spoke to him this morning about you, and he told me to send you around about five o'clock. He'll pay \$30 a month and feed you. You can sleep home."

"I'll take that if I can get it."

"You can get it, all right."

"How about yourself?"

"I'm going to be night clerk at the same house."

"That so? Then we'll both be fixed for the summer!" said Dick, joyfully.

"Yes."

"Why didn't you tell me this when we first started out?"

"I thought it would be more of a pleasant surprise if I held it back," chuckled Tom.

"It's a big surprise to me. I never thought of striking the hotel men for a job at this late day. I supposed everythink was taken up a month ago, for the hotels open up for business next week."

"Everything was taken up, but the two positions in question suddenly became vacant. I got the tip this morning about the night clerk job and I hustled around to the hotel and captured it. Then I spoke for you. All you've got to do now is to call on Mr. Sandford and tell him you'll take the place."

"I'll do it, bet your life. Let's get back now, we've caught fish enough for supper and breakfast."

The boys wound in their lines, strung their fish, and started for the bridge across the creek.

A car bound for Englewood came along just as they reached it.

"Give us a lift across, will you?" Tom asked the motor-man, who looked kind of friendly.

"Sure. Jump on," was the man's reply.

The boys got on the car, and half a minute later got off on the other side, after thanking the motorman for the favor.

Then they started for their homes.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHANCE OF HIS LIFE.

The boys parted at the junction of the beach road and Jefferson Street, Dick taking the former, which led to the Bay View Hotel, while Tom followed the latter, which would take him into the heart of Englewood Village.

He took Dick's string of fish, as well as his pole and line, to leave at his chum's house, which, as we have said, was next door to his own.

When Tom walked into the house with his own fish he found his aunt in the kitchen fixing the fire in the stove.

"What do you think of these beauties?" he said to the cheerful-looking woman, holding up his string of the finny tribe. "There's a dozen of them just out of the bay."

"They are fine," his aunt replied. "I'll fry three of them for supper. I guess you won't be able to eat more than two yourself. You'd better take half of them around to Mrs. Dooley. Her son isn't doing anything at present, and I don't believe they've got any too much to eat in the house."

"I intended to do that, Aunt Mary," said Tom. "I'll clean three of the fish for you and then run around with six of the balance to Mrs. Dooley. I've no doubt but she'll be glad to get them."

Mrs. Dooley, mother of Mike Dooley, whom Tom had mentioned to Dick as a likely lad to conduct the ferry enterprise at the trolley bridge in the creek, was a poor widow who earned a scanty living assisting her more fortunate neighbors in their house cleaning and washing.

Whenever Tom and Dick went fishing, if they were fortunate, they never failed to save a few of their catch for the worthy widow.

They also assisted her in other ways when the opportunity offered, and, consequently, Mrs. Dooley had a warm spot in her heart for both boys.

On his way to the widow's cottage with the fish, Tom's mind was occupied with thoughts about the Locke Farm on the Ste. Marie River, about eight miles from Englewood.

In fact, he had been thinking of little else for more than a week, ever since he had accidentally learned about certain projected improvements that were to be made in that neighborhood.

The projectors of the enterprise were keeping their plans a profound secret as yet, not even a hint of what was in contemplation having reached the ears of the editor of the Englewood "News."

About a week previous Tom was sunning himself one morning at the end of the raised boardwalk in front of the line of bathhouses attached to the Bay View Hotel, when two gentlemen, one of whom was Major Willard Nutte, a wealthy resident of the neighborhood, and vice-president of the Minneapolis, St. Paul & Sault Ste. Marie Railroad, walked down the walk and came to a halt right above the spot where Tom was sitting.

He heard the whole of their conversation, and its import greatly surprised and interested him.

The facts he gleaned amounted to the following:

A dam was to be built near the site of the old water-power on the Ste. Marie River, ten miles above its outlet into the bay, and several manufactures, as well as a big sawing and planing mill, were to be erected.

The most important of these plants was to build freight and passenger cars for the M., St. P. & S. Ste. M. R. R. Co.

Other industries in view were a fish-canning establishment; a flour and grist mill; a furniture factory, and a newly invented breakfast food product.

A syndicate of capitalists, headed by Major Nutte, was already formed to carry out the scheme.

It was expected that the plans and specifications would be ready by the first of August, when bids would be invited for the erection of the dam.

Later on bids would be asked for the construction of the factories, as well as for several hundred small cottages for the people who would be employed at the various industries.

The saw and planing mill would be put in advance to supply lumber on the spot for the buildings.

The railroad company would build a branch line to the place, and it was expected that a thriving village or small town, that would put Englewood in the shade, would spring right up out of the wilderness, as it were.

The site of this projected village, including the ground on which the factories were to be built, had been purchased a year previous by Major Nutte, but possession, by special agreement with the former owner, a farmer who cultivated the land, was deferred until after the present year's harvest.

Its boundaries began at the foot of the northern end of the short bluff owned by Andrew Locke, a shiftless individual, who had parted with all the tillable acres he had originally owned, and with his wife was now confined to what was considered the comparatively valueless bluff, the area of which was fifty acres.

Locke and his wife were living on the \$6,000 he had gotten for his land.

Their residence was a small farmhouse on the top of the bluff overlooking the river and the surrounding country.

The outbuildings, no longer of much use to their owner, were in poor shape, and going to ruin.

The bluff was largely composed of limestone, and this fact had been noted by Tom Trowbridge a few months before, when he was up that way on his wheel.

After Major Nutte and his companion had walked away from the end of the boardwalk, never suspecting that they had had a listener to their important conversation, Tom continued to sit there and think about the revelation he had got on to.

He easily saw that it was going to be a big thing for that part of the State.

Probably a million or more dollars would have to be spent before the syndicate could begin to look for results; but, in the long run, he had little doubt that Major Nutte and his associates would realize largely on their investment.

The major's connection and influence with the big railroad company was an asset which would go a long way toward rendering the project a success, for the car works was bound to pay from the very start.

What particularly interested Tom was the contemplated dam.

This would require a large amount of cheap stone for its construction.

And that stone was right on the ground in the shape of Andrew Locke's fifty acres of unprofitable farming land.

But for that fact the stone would have to be brought from a considerable distance, and that would cost money.

Whoever got the contract for building the dam would find the Locke Farm a valuable asset, and it was now in the market for a paltry \$1,000.

"If I could buy that bluff I'd stand to make a raft of money out of it," the boy told himself, with a thrill at the possibilities of the scheme. "But, as I haven't a cent of capital, and no possibility of getting any, I stand as much show of getting it as I do of buying the Englewood & Preston Trolley Line. Here is the chance of a fellow's life going to waste for the lack of a few hundred dollars. It's tough, that's what it is!"

Tom knew that the first contractor who came to estimate on the building of the dam would as a preliminary measure snap up the bluff at the low price at which it was offered, for its possession would enable him to easily outbid all rival competitors.

"If I owned that farm I could make good terms with the successful contractor for the stone," thought Tom. "The money I'd make out of it would give me the start in the world I'm looking for. If I were only a civil engineer I could even put in a bid myself for building the dam. How fine it would sound to have the following notice appear in the 'News': 'Tom Trowbridge, one of the rising young men of the village, has secured the contract for building the new dam across the Ste. Marie River. We congratulate him on his success, which is largely due to his foresight in securing the Locke Farm, the hitherto unproductive acres

of which now prove of great value in furnishing the material for the construction of the dam. We predict for this young man a brilliant future."

After all, it was only another of Tom's castles in the air, for where was he to get \$1,000 to buy the Locke Farm?

Nevertheless, the possibilities of the thing appealed so strongly to his ambitious nature that he returned home that day feeling like a different boy altogether.

CHAPTER IV.

A RACE FOR A LIFE.

After supper that evening Dick Bristol ran in to his friend's home to tell him that he had gotten the job as assistant to Captain Blakeley, who would have charge of the string of bathhouses connected with the Bay View Hotel.

"That will carry me over till the factory reopens in September," said Dick, who was in a happy humor. "Mother and sis are tickled to death over my good luck. They were afraid I'd be idle all summer, for jobs are mighty scarce around Englewood. I told the folks that you got me the opening, and they want you to come in so they can thank you."

"I don't want to be thanked for doing you a favor, old chap. You'd do the same for me if you had the chance."

"Sure I would," replied Dick, in a tone that showed he meant it.

"When are you going to work? Next week?"

"I start in the morning. The houses have got to be painted, and I've got to help the captain do the work. That will take the balance of the week. You don't come on till the house opens next Wednesday, do you?"

"No," replied Tom.

"Then you'll have another week's vacation. I wouldn't mind if I had that, too. How are you going to put in the time?"

"I couldn't tell you. I'll attend to that ferry scheme for one thing, so it will be in working order when it's needed. I've got to borrow the flat-boat, paint it up in gaudy colors, and rig a mast for the white flag that's to have the legend of 'Down With Monopoly' on it. That will occupy half a day, at any rate."

"I'd like to see Deacon Fitch's face after that boat goes into commission and the fact is reported to him," chuckled Dick. "Maybe he'll put a stop to it."

"How can he? Mike or any one else has the right to row passengers across the creek if they want to go by boat in preference to the trolley. That's one of the advantages of a free country."

"Are you sure that Mike doesn't require a franchise?" grinned Dick.

"I guess it won't be necessary to ask the State Legislature to grant him one."

"I'll bet Herbert Fitch will make it his business to try and bulldoze Mike out of the scheme."

"Mike doesn't care a rap for Herbert Fitch, and he can't be bluffed worth a cent. I'll tell Mike not to pay any attention to him."

"Herbert will be hopping mad if Mike doesn't take his hat off to him."

"Who cares if he does get mad? He isn't so much, except in his own opinion."

"That don't count a whole lot in my opinion."

"Nor in mine, either."

The boys then got talking about something else, and after a while Dick went home.

Tom had told Mrs. Murphy to send Mike over to the cottage in the morning, and the lad was on hand before Tom got through breakfast.

Tom explained the ferry scheme to him, and Mike was enchanted with the opportunity it offered him to make a little money.

He declared that he would stick it out all season if the summer visitors were disposed to patronize him.

Tom took Mike with him when he went to borrow the flat-boat.

On the way Tom bought some red, white and blue paint and a couple of brushes to apply it.

They hauled the boat out of the water, cleaned it thor-

oughly, and then painted three stripes around it from stem to stern.

It was left to dry in the sunshine under Mike's care.

Tom then went over to see how Dick was getting on at the bathhouses.

He found him arrayed in a pair of overalls with a pot of white paint and a brush, working away for all he was worth.

"Hello, Dick, who are things coming on?" he asked.

"All right."

"Where's the captain?"

"Mr. Sandford sent after him a few minutes ago."

"Well, Mike and I painted the outside of the flatboat red, white and blue, and it is drying now. As soon as it is ready to turn over I'm going to have Mike give the inside a couple of coats of white. To-morrow I'll fit the pole in it, and then the boat will be ready for business as soon as the flag has been prepared for nailing to the top of the pole."

"You didn't lose any time over the matter," said Dick.

"No. I don't believe in putting off till to-morrow what can be done to-day."

Tom remained an hour talking to his chum, and then went back to the place where Mike was watching the flat-boat.

The paint was dry enough to permit the boat to be turned over, and then Tom and the widow's son gave the inside the first coat of white color.

"I'm going home now, Mike. You'd better do the same. Come back some time this afternoon and give the inside a second coat of the white. I won't be around again till to-morrow morning, when I'll put the pole in."

Tom went home and found his dinner waiting for him.

After he had eaten it he got out his wheel and started for a spin up the road in the direction of the Locke Farm.

That locality had now a peculiar attraction for him, though he did not see the remotest chance of benefiting by the advance information that he had accidentally got possession of.

Still, he wanted to go out there and inspect the probable site of the dam, and see where the factories and new village would probably be built.

He had nothing else on his hands, anyway, and it was as good a way to kill time and amuse himself as he could think of, anyway.

It was a gorgeous afternoon for a run up the road, and, though he missed the companionship of Dick, he thoroughly enjoyed the invigorating exercise.

The farm was about eight miles by the road from Englewood, and he rapidly reduced that distance as the moments sped by.

As he passed Major Nutte's residence, that gentleman's daughter Hazel came rushing out on her coal-black mare, Queen Bess, a thoroughbred of exquisite proportions.

She was a lovely girl, a pure blonde, with golden hair, blue eyes, and a form like a fairy.

She was a daring, graceful and experienced equestrienne.

Tom favored her with a look of admiration as she flew by him, bound in the same direction as himself,

A curve in the highway soon hid her from his sight.

When he got around the curve she was not in sight.

This was not extraordinary, as another bend a third of a mile further on cut off an extended view of the road.

Tom put on a spurt and was soon flying around the other turn himself.

Then a strange and unexpected scene met his sight.

Two tough-looking men had stopped the horse and the fair girl, and while one was holding the steed by the bridle the other was trying to unseat Miss Nutte.

As Tom came in view she was striking at the fellow with the heavy end of her whip, but as it was but a light, fancy affair, he minded the blows very little.

Tom saw that it was up to him to rescue the girl from further indignity, so he put on fresh speed and bore down upon the scene of trouble at a rapid rate.

The tramps were so intent on the job in hand that they did not notice Tom's approach until he was right upon them.

As he rushed up he dealt the rascal who had hold of Miss Nutte a stinging blow in the face which bowled him over as clean as a nine-pin.

He struck the road heavily and lay quite unconscious.

Tom could not stop until he had gone nearly a hundred

A LUCKY CONTRACT.

feet ahead, then he turned and started back for the ruffian who held the bridle.

The girl had been partially unseated by the fellow that Tom had knocked out, and as she jumped back on the saddle she struck the other man a blow in the face with her whip-handle.

The man uttered an imprecation of mingled pain and rage, and releasing the bridle, seized Miss Nutte by the arm and jerked her partly from her saddle.

At that moment Tom came up and struck him in the mouth with his fist.

Just as he did it, the mare, who was a spirited animal, and had been exceedingly restive under the unusual conditions, sprang forward.

The girl uttered a shrill scream as she felt herself falling.

The sleeve of her dress gave way, leaving a piece of the cloth in the rascal's hand.

That saved her, for with admirable presence of mind she seized the mare's mane and clung to it frantically as the animal dashed away down the road.

Under the circumstances she was unable to regain her seat on the saddle, but hung over sideways and backward, her foot caught in the stirrup, in great peril of her life, clinging to the mane while the mare plunged ahead on her course, clearly in a state of terror.

Tom took in the situation at a glance, and spinning around, started in pursuit.

The mare was a fleet-footed animal, but she was greatly handicapped by the way her rider hung on to her.

Tom, fearful that the girl might tumble off at any moment, got down to work and spun along at high racing speed.

The spokes of his wheels flashed in the sunshine like circlets of fire.

Fortunately, the road was in fine condition, hard and smooth, with no stony obstructions, and the boy began to gradually pull up on the fleeing horse.

But his work was cut out for him, just the same.

The first mile was pulled off at a clip that would have won Tom a prize at a bicycle race.

The second mile was covered in hardly less time, with the boy much nearer the mare.

The third mile brought them in sight of the St. Mari River, glistening in the distance.

Farmhands working in a field close by stopped to gape in astonishment at the strange race, expecting to see the endangered girl fall under the mare's legs any moment as she and the animal swept by.

They yelled encouragement to Tom, as, bent forward over the handles of his machine, he swept by, pedaling with all his might, for they easily divined that his object was to rescue the imperiled girl.

Foot by foot Tom crept up on the frightened mare, but the race was now growing more serious every moment, for the animal was making straight for the river, and whether she would keep to the road as it swung around a sharp curve and ran down the stream was a question in her excited condition.

As she approached the turn, Tom, by a special spurt, came up with her flanks.

A few moments more and he was abreast of her.

Then the plucky boy, now thoroughly winded and exhausted by his terrible ride, made a last desperate effort to win out, for he felt that he could no longer sustain the speed he had been going at.

It carried him up to the mare's neck, and, reaching out he seized the bridle just as the mare left the road and plunged on toward the river bank.

He threw his left leg over the handles and allowed the machine to take care of itself, at the same time he wound his right arm around the mare's neck to support himself, and threw his left arm across the animal's eyes, bending her head down.

This had more effect than anything else in stopping the flight of Queen Bess.

Unable to see, she made frantic efforts to free her head, and not being able to do so, for Tom clung on like grim death, she began to hold back, and finally came to a full stop at the very brink of the river bank, where she stood trembling in every limb and white with sweat.

Tom slipped to the ground, and running around, grabbed the half unconscious girl in his arms and shoved her up on

the saddle, where she swayed back and forth, like a reed shaken in a soft wind.

Then he slipped around to the other side and grabbed her again, releasing her foot, which was entangled in the stirrup.

Pulling her toward him, she fell limply into his arms, but still maintained her death-like grip on the mare's mane.

"Save me!" she breathed, letting her head drop on his shoulder.

"You are safe, Miss Nutte," he replied. "Let go your hold on the mane."

She did so, and then with a sigh fainted dead away.

CHAPTER V.

"YOU SHALL HAVE THE THOUSAND DOLLARS."

Tom's legs seemed to give way under him all at once. His brain began to swim and a mist came before his eyes. He had overdone himself, and the reaction had set in.

He staggered a few feet away, sank to the soft sod and fell back unconscious, with Hazel Nutte clasped in his arms.

When Tom recovered his senses he saw Miss Nutte bending over him.

His head was in her lap and she was rubbing his temples and forehead in an effort to bring him to.

For a moment or two he looked into her face in a confused way, as if wondering why he was in that situation, then he remembered the cause of it all and raised himself up, feeling a bit sheepish to think that he had succumbed under the ordeal to which he had been subjected.

"Are you much hurt?" asked the girl, sympathetically.

"I guess not," replied Tom. "I don't know how I came to faint away. I suppose I overdid myself on the bicycle chasing you and the horse. I feel as weak as a cat, but I guess I'll come around in a few minutes. I hope you are all right, Miss Nutte. You and the mare had a narrow escape from going into the river. I barely caught you in time."

"I know it," she replied. "You saved my life, and Queen Bess's, too. I am very, very grateful to you. You are a brave and plucky boy. You rescued me from those two ramps, also. How shall I ever be able to thank you enough?"

"Don't worry about that, Miss Nutte. I am very glad to have been able to render you a service. When I saw the fix you were in I could not do otherwise than try my best to save you. Anybody else would have done the same for you under the circumstances."

"I am sure nobody could have done any better than you did. You had better lie down on the grass. You look very white."

"I guess I will. I feel all knocked up," he said, lying back.

"I will walk Bess up and down while you are resting, for I'm afraid she might catch cold, notwithstanding that it's a warm day. She's as wet as though she'd been in the river."

She went to the horse, which was walking quietly about, and rubbed her down as well as she could with her handkerchief, and then she led her up and down the bank of the river until she was cooled off.

By that time Tom felt pretty good again, and was on his feet.

"I shall never forget what you've done for me as long as I live," said the girl to him, when she rejoined him. "Neither will my father. What is your name?"

"Tom Trowbridge."

"You live in the village, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"I don't remember having seen you before, though I've been living in the neighborhood of Englewood for two years."

"I suppose not, miss, as I've been working all day in the Englewood Wagon Works for nearly two years. The place is shut down for the summer now, and I'm idle at present. But that will only be for a week, as I have been engaged by Mr. Sandford, owner of the Bay View Hotel, as night clerk, up to September first."

"Well, I'm glad to know you, Mr. Trowbridge. My name is Hazel Nutte. My father is Major William Nutte, as you probably know. He is vice-president of the Minneapolis, St. Paul & Sault Ste. Marie Railroad. You must go back

with me to my home, so that my father and mother can thank you for what you did for me."

"I don't think it will be necessary for them to thank me, as you have already done so," replied Tom.

"Oh, they wouldn't be satisfied unless they did. You will go, won't you?"

Tom couldn't refuse.

In fact, the prospect of being a while in this charming girl's company, and being so favorably regarded by her, was particularly delightful to the boy.

There wasn't a girl in the village who could compare with her in grace and loveliness, and Tom felt proud of the honor of her society even for a limited time.

He looked around for his wheel, and found it some distance away, lying on its side close to the river bank.

He was glad to find that it had not been injured in the least.

"Shall we ride down to the river a bit before we go back?" Hazel Nutte said. "It is early in the afternoon yet."

"Anything you say goes with me, Miss Nutte," answered Tom.

He assisted her into the saddle, and mounting his wheel they turned down the river road at a slow gait.

"I should love to go up on that bluff where that farmhouse is, for one could get a fine view of the country from that elevation," said the girl.

"Well, I guess there will be no objection to our going up. A man by the name of Locke lives there with his wife. The place is for sale, as you can see by that sign, but nobody wants it."

"Why not?" replied the major's daughter, in some surprise. "I should think it was a fine, airy spot to live."

"That part of it is all right. People, however, don't buy land around here just to get a fine view of the country. They expect to make a living and something better off the ground. There's no way of doing that on the bluff. It's too stony."

"Then why did this Mr. Locke buy just the bluff when he came here?"

"He didn't. When he purchased the place there was a hundred and fifty acres to it, one hundred of which was good planting ground. He has the reputation of being a shiftless kind of man, for he never worked his farm to much advantage, and gradually got into debt. Finally he had the chance to sell the hundred good acres to his neighbor on the east. The man would have taken the whole farm, but Locke wanted too much for it, and, as the bluff was of no use to the other farmer he made the owner an offer of \$60 an acre for the available land, or above \$10 more than land around here was fetching, and Locke sold it to him, and is now living in idleness on the bluff off the money. Within the last year he's had the bluff in the market for \$30, and then \$25 an acre, and lately as low as \$20, which shows that he wants to get away altogether. If I had \$1,000 I'd buy it, for I'd like to get the place badly. But I haven't got a cent, so there's no chance of my getting it."

As he spoke they were slowly ascending the path that led to the top of the bluff, Tom on foot trundling his wheel.

"What would you do with the place if you owned it?" Hazel asked him.

"I'd make a pile of money off it—many times the \$1,000 that Locke wants for it."

"Indeed!" she exclaimed, much interested. "Then why not explain your plans to my father? He will be glad to help you in acknowledgment of the great service you have rendered me."

"There are reasons why I wouldn't like to explain my plans to your father," replied Tom. "I will explain everything to you if you will promise me not to say a word about the matter."

"Of course I promise," she said.

"Let us stop at this point while I tell you how, if I owned this bluff, I could make a lot of money."

"Very well," she replied. "Will you help me dismount?"

Tom assisted her down.

"To begin with, I ask you if know about any plans that your father, in connection with other moneyed men, has with respect to this neighborhood?"

She looked at him in great surprise before answering.

"How did you learn that he had any plans about this place?"

"I will tell you, though I am not sure that you will approve of the way I came to hear about the matter. How-

ever, I haven't said a word on the subject to any one, and don't mean to, yourself excepted."

Tom then explained how he had overheard her father talking to a gentleman at the end of the boardwalk in front of the bathhouses belonging to the Bay View Hotel about a week since, and he told her everything he had learned on that occasion.

"I dare say I should not have listened to a conversation not intended for my ears, Miss Nutte, but I was so interested in the matter under discussion that I overlooked the fact that I was not exactly doing the proper thing. I hope you will excuse me for doing so, for I should feel very bad if I suffered in your esteem."

"I owe you too much to think of chiding you for playing the part of a listener," she said, gently. "I am sure no harm will come from it, as I know you will be silent about what you heard. Mother and I are acquainted with father's plans, but it is a great secret. It might embarrass the enterprise if the news received premature circulation."

"You may depend that no one will ever hear a whisper from me."

"I believe you," she said, laying a hand on his arm. "Now tell me in what way does my father's plans affect you with relation to this bluff."

"It will take a considerable quantity of suitable stone to build the dam that is to be constructed across this river. That kind of stone is right here in the bluff. If I owned the bluff I could sell it at a big profit to the contractor whose bid is accepted. It would be to his interest to get possession of it, for otherwise he would have to buy the stone at a distance and pay heavy transportation charges on it. The nearest station at present on the railroad is more than fifteen miles from here, and I doubt if the contemplated branch line will be started before the dam is well under way. Look what it would cost to haul the stone to this spot. Under these circumstances think what the possession of \$1,000 means to me. It would give me a start in life, and that's what I'm looking for."

"Tom Trowbridge, you shall have the thousand dollars," said Hazel, regarding him with an approving smile.

CHAPTER VI.

TOM SECURES THE LOCKE FARM.

If a bomb had been exploded under Tom he couldn't have felt more astonished.

He looked at the girl as if he wasn't sure he had heard aright.

"What did you say?" he asked.

"Will you explain just how I am to get it?"

"I have considerably over a thousand dollars in my own name in the savings department of the Englewood Bank. I will lend you \$1,000 of it for as long a time as you need it, without security. I would give it to you, but I feel that you would not accept it that way. You can pay the thousand back out of your profits. My father need not know anything about the matter, and it will not be necessary for you to explain to him that you know anything about his plans. It is better that way, for though he would not censure you for the way in which the knowledge of his enterprise came into your possession, still he might not like it, and I want you to stand well with him. I can see that you are smart and ambitious, and are bound to get ahead, so I want to do what little I can to make an opening for you. My gratitude alone would induce me to do that, but I may say quite frankly that I like you independent of the service you have done for me. So you will take the money, will you not?"

"As much as I want that money, and as much as it would do for me, I do not know if I ought to take to take advantage of your generosity, Miss Nutte. It almost looks like a kind of pay for saving your life."

"You are quite wrong. I am only lending you the money. It is merely a small favor on my part, and I should feel hurt if you refused to accept it."

"Then I will take it, and I thank you for the favor with all my heart. You are perhaps doing more for me than you think. To get immediate possession of this bluff I look upon as the chance of my life. You are putting that chance in my hands. It is not impossible but you may be responsible for whatever success in life comes to me. If so, I shall

in my hands. It is not impossible but you may be responsible for gratitude."

"The gratitude will always be on my side, Tom Trowbridge. Think what must have been my fate if Bess had carried me into the river, with my foot entangled in her stirrup. I should have been drowned before she could have found a spot to get on the bank again. Can either of us doubt for a moment that you saved my life?"

"Well, I'm glad I did. I'd risk my life any day to save you from peril. That's all I can say, except that I like you and hope we shall always be good friends."

"I'm sure we shall," she said, earnestly. "At least it won't be my fault if we are not."

"Nor mine," replied Tom.

"We will go back now," said Hazel.

"You won't go to the top of the bluff, then?"

"No, I will wait until the property is yours."

They walked back to the road, then, after helping Hazel in the saddle, Tom got on his wheel and they started off in the direction of Englewood at a rapid clip.

They saw no signs of the two tramps on the way back, and in due time reached the Nutte mansion.

Major Nutte and his wife were sitting on the veranda when Hazel and Tom entered the grounds.

The girl introduced Tom to her parents, and then described her adventure with the tramps, which led to the mare becoming frightened and running away with her.

She told how Tom had come to her rescue, and how he had given chase on his wheel when Queen Bess ran away, and had saved her and the mare from a plunge in the river which would probably have been fatal to both.

The major and his wife were astonished and concerned at the narrow escape she had had, and they could not sufficiently express their gratitude to the brave boy.

They prevailed on Tom to remain to tea, and after the meal Major Nutte took him into his library and asked him if he could do anything for him.

Tom thanked him for the offer, and said that at present the major could do nothing for him.

"Well, my boy, I shall not be satisfied until I have given you some substantial evidence of my appreciation of your gallant services to my daughter," said the rich man. "Remember that I can push you ahead in the world. A friend at court is a good thing to have, and I shall always be that to you if you will permit me to help you."

"I am much obliged to you, Major Nutte; but it is my ambition to get on without any one's help, except when circumstances make it necessary for me to ask a favor."

"Whenever you want a favor of me you have only to ask it, and it will be granted at once," replied the major, who rather admired the boy's independent spirit.

Hazel accompanied Tom to the gate, and it was arranged between them that she was to meet him next morning about ten o'clock at his aunt's cottage, when she would go to the bank and draw \$100, which was all he said that he would require at present to pay down on the contract for the purchase of the Locke property.

The deal would have to be put through in his aunt's name, since the law did not permit a minor to hold real property in his own name.

When he got home Tom told his aunt about his stirring experiences that afternoon and how he had made the acquaintance of Hazel Nutte and her parents.

Then he told her that the young lady was going to lend him \$1,000 with which to purchase the Locke Farm.

"Why, what do you want with that place, Tom?" asked his aunt, in astonishment.

"Oh, I've got a scheme in view that will probably put every cent of \$10,000 in my pocket in a short time."

"Why, I've heard people say that the Locke Farm is hardly worth paying taxes on."

"The people who said that don't know what they're talking about."

"I wish you would explain to me how you expect to make so much money out of such an apparently worthless bit of ground."

"I can't explain it now, aunt. I am bound in honor not to say a word about the matter to any one. What I want you to do is to go out to the Locke place with me and arrange for the purchase of the bluff. I'll get \$100 to-morrow morning for you to pay down to bind the bargain. The balance will be forthcoming when the deeds are ready."

Then you will hold the property in your name for me. You'll do this to oblige me, won't you, auntie?"

"I'll do anything in the world to oblige you, Tom."

"I knew you would, aunty, dear," he said, kissing her.

Next morning Tom went down to take a look at the flatboat, and found that Mike Dooley had applied the second coat of white paint in good shape, and that the boat made quite a presentable appearance.

He deferred putting in the pole until he had attended to his property business.

At ten o'clock he was back at the cottage waiting for Hazel to put in her appearance.

She arrived soon after, and Tom introduced her to his aunt, who was quite taken with her good looks and lady-like ways.

After a short visit she and Tom went to the bank together, and he got the \$100.

As soon as dinner was over, Tom borrowed a horse and buggy and drove his aunt out to the Locke Farm.

When Tom stated the object of their call, Andrew Locke was ready to do business.

A new and unexpected difficulty, however, presented itself. Locke wanted an additional \$500 for the farmhouse.

Tom made a strenuous objection to this, and told him he could move the house off if he wanted to.

Locke said he wasn't going to move anything but his personal property, and refused to make any deal that did not include the house at \$500 extra.

Of course the boy wasn't going to let the \$500 stand in his way of getting the property, for he would manage to raise it some way when the time came to close the deal, so Locke accepted the \$100 deposit and agreed to come to the village next morning and sign the contract.

This he did, and Tom hired one of the two village lawyers to have the fifty acres surveyed, Locke's title to the ground passed upon, and a deed transferring the rocky farm in a legal way to his aunt.

A few days later he called on Hazel Nutte, told her he had bought the property, and then explained how he would require another \$500 to pay for the farmhouse.

She agreed to loan him the additional sum, and the boy returned home perfectly satisfied that his start in life was now assured.

CHAPTER VII.

TOM'S NEW SCHEME.

On the following Wednesday the Bay View Hotel opened with three guests, and Tom went to work that night.

The Englewood Beach Hotel also threw open its doors, and every day thereafter more guests arrived, most of them permanent for the season.

Both houses were crowded and everything in full swing by the Fourth of July.

A few days before that Mike Dooley put the flatboat in commission, and the summer visitors who preferred to walk over to North Beach to taking the trolley patronized this unique mode of conveyance across the creek.

Mike's ferryboat was soon known to everybody at both beaches, and many walked to the creek just for the fun of being poled across the short stretch of water.

Although he had a sign on the boat stating that his remuneration was a penny each way, he got more nickels than coppers, and sometimes he got ten cents, and occasionally a quarter from those liberally disposed.

Consequently the trolley people gained nothing by their shabby trick.

Deacon Fitch, as soon as the facts were reported to him, sent a couple of his men to put Mike out of business.

The men happened to appear at a time when a number of the summer visitors were waiting to be taken across the creek, and Mike appealed to them for protection.

Several strapping college lads seized the enemy and ducked them in the stream, and that put a temporary end to the raid.

Tom, being notified of the action of the trolley company, attended a meeting of the Town Council of Englewood and secured Mike a permit to continue the business, explaining that Mike was a poor boy who needed the money.

Finding that the trolley company was getting disliked for its meanness, the deacon ordered the bridge restored to its former shape.

This action on his part, however, did not break up the

ferry, as by this time all the visitors had learned that Mike was the son of a poor widow who needed financial help, and continued to do as much business as before.

About the middle of July the deed conveying the Locke Farm to Mrs. Mary Dean, Tom's aunt, was signed, and the fact that the rocky bluff had passed into her possession was duly chronicled in the Englewood "News," and created considerable speculation among the villagers, who had the idea that the Locke property was a quince.

People wondered what Mrs. Dean proposed to do with her purchase.

Others, who had been under the impression that Tom's relative was not very well off, were curious to learn where she had gotten the \$1,500 to pay for the place.

The general idea was that she had come into a legacy.

Tom was quizzed on the subject, but had nothing to say.

The Lockes carted their household goods away and then Tom induced Mrs. Dooley to go out there and take charge of the house.

Of course Mike had to accompany her, and that put the creek ferry out of business, much to Deacon Fitch's satisfaction.

After deducting the expenses of the enterprise out of the share of the receipts that Mike had faithfully turned over each day to Tom, the latter had a balance of \$6, which he presented to the Widow Dooley.

Tom had bought Locke's cow and his small stock of poultry, and the widow and her son had the benefit of these in addition to free rent.

Mike got work on the adjacent farm, and his mother secured quite a bit of washing to take home, so that three or four days a week there was always a display of clothes on the lines on the top of the bluff.

About the first of August the plans of the syndicate which was going to improve that section were completed, and the news was permitted to get out.

The Englewood "News" printed a column about Major Nutte's enterprise, and the facts created not a little excitement in the village and neighborhood.

The farmers whose property adjoined, or was not far from the site of the projected factories and the new village which the starting of the industries would cause to spring into existence, began to hug themselves with satisfaction.

The mere publication of the project made their properties more valuable, and in due time the facilities offered by the branch railroad, which would run to Englewood, for sending their produce to market was bound to bring an added income to their pockets.

No one, however, as yet suspected that the new owner of the bluff would benefit to any great extent by the new condition of things, unless possibly it was covered with homes for the workingmen who would in time come to work in the factories.

But it would cost money to build houses, and houses had to be built before they could be rented.

Possibly Major Nutte might buy the bluff at an advance on the price paid to Locke, the gossips argued, and in that way Mrs. Dean might be able to double her investment.

Tom, in getting possession of the bluff, had thought of nothing but the profit to come out of the stone that would be needed to build the dam.

It was about this time that another advantage occurred to him.

He and Hazel, with whom he was now pretty thick, went out to the bluff one afternoon for a ride in the girl's pony phaeton.

As they were slowly mounting the path to the farmhouse, Tom said:

"Say, Hazel," he called her by her first name now, and she called him Tom, "I see another chance to get additional profit out of this property, with your father's backing, and he promised to do me a favor any time I asked it."

"What is it, Tom?" asked the girl, in an interested tone.

"Why, when this rock has all been cut away and used up it will leave me with a flat piece of ground on my hands. What's the matter with having a couple of streets laid out through it and making it an addition to the village? With the profits I expect to realize out of the rock I can build a number of small cottages and rent them at a rate which will induce people to take them. That will largely raise the value of the whole fifty acres. It will enable me to mortgage it for enough more money to build additional houses. Then I can mortgage those for enough to build

a few more. By that means I ought to be able to become quite an extensive landlord. What do you think of the idea?"

"It is just splendid! Papa will lend you all the money you'll need, for he'll have security for it. Then, if you should for any reason ever get into temporary financial difficulties he will carry you over. He's very anxious to help you in some way. I heard him tell mother so the other day. He feels under such great obligations to you for saving my life that he wants to give you some substantial evidence of his gratitude."

"Well, the only substantial evidence of his gratitude I will accept will be the advantage of his influence in connection with this new plan of mine. I should be glad to borrow of him the money necessary to push it on a big scale. Every speculator has to borrow money to carry out an extensive enterprise. If your father has confidence enough in me to put up the coin it must be on the same business basis as I would have to make with a stranger, for I mean to work out my own fortune. He shall have the same interest from me he would exact from anybody else proposing a similar scheme. I intend to do business on business principles. It is the only way to feel thoroughly independent. There's a big fortune in this property for me if I'm smart enough to dig it out, and I don't mean to let any grass grow under my feet in the effort to make a grand success of the enterprise."

"I am satisfied you will succeed, Tom," replied Hazel, confidently. "Papa says you have the right stuff in you, and I knew you had from the day we first met."

"You are very kind to encourage me, Hazel," said Tom with a look of appreciation.

"Why, I'm only telling you the truth. Some day you'll be rich."

"I hope so. Not because I'm in love with money itself, but because of the advantages it brings a person. There is another reason, too, why I want to be rich."

"What is it?"

"That's a secret I don't dare tell even to you."

Hazel looked at him a moment, and then said.

"This is some new business project you are thinking about?"

"No. It is something more important to me even than that?"

"Something more important?" she said, in a puzzled tone.

"Yes. It is a dream, and yet I am sure the whole happiness of my life will depend on whether it can ever be realized or not."

"It must be very, very important."

"It is. The prize I would win is the most precious thing in all the world."

"And you can't tell me what it is?"

"Some day I hope I may be able to do so, but if I told you now," he added, with a strange, wistful expression, "you would think me presumptuous."

"Presumptuous!" she said. "In what way?"

"That's my secret. We are good friends now. I don't want anything to come between us that would make us less so."

"You would have to do something very, very bad to make me think less of you, Tom," Hazel replied, earnestly. "And I am certain you never will be guilty of an act which you would regret."

"I should hope not. The secret I am speaking about isn't anything I am ashamed to tell you, but it's something I'm afraid to tell you."

"Afraid to tell me?" she replied, in surprise.

"That's the size of it."

"Why are you afraid to tell me anything that you're not ashamed of?"

"Oh, because—it might not exactly please you."

"How can you tell that?"

"I can't tell; but I don't like to take the chances."

"You ridiculous boy! Come, now, tell me what this big secret is. I am curious to know," she said, coaxingly.

They had reached the top of the bluff by this time, and Tom had driven the pony under a tree that shaded the front door of the house.

"No," he answered. "I'll tell you some day, perhaps, but not now."

He jumped out of the phaeton and tied the pony to the tree.

Then he held out his hand to her, and she sprang lightly to the ground.

"I don't see any sign of Mrs. Dooley around," he said. "She may have gone to deliver some wash."

He tried the knob of the back door.

It was not locked.

"Mrs. Dooley is somewhere around the house, after all," he said. "We'll walk in and surprise her."

They entered the kitchen and shut the door.

Hazel sat down and Tom opened the door leading into a passage which connected the front with the back of the house.

Instantly two rough-looking men sprang out and seized the boy.

They were the two tramps who had held up Hazel that afternoon six weeks before.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE HOUSE ON THE BLUFF.

Tom, taken by surprise, was an easy victim.

He put up a struggle, of course, but it amounted to very little against the two ruffians.

Hazel sprang up with a low scream.

She was a plucky little girl, and had no idea either of fainting or running away and leaving her escort in a bad pickle.

Her eyes lighted on a broom.

She seized it and attacked the nearest rascal with such vigor that he had to let go of Tom to defend himself.

He grabbed the broom-handle and wrenched it away from her, then he caught her by the wrist with one hand, forced her into a chair and put his other hand over her mouth.

While he was doing this the other tramp threw Tom on the floor and sat on him.

"You're the chap who butted in that day on the road," gritted the Russian. "You slugged me in the jaw and nearly broke my face. I reckon I'll fix ye now for that."

"If you do anything to us you'll land in the county jail pretty quick," replied Tom, stoutly.

"We'll take the chances of that," replied the man, with an ugly laugh. "Tie and gag that girl, Bill," he added to his companion. "so she can't do nothin', and then lend me a hand with this young rooster."

The man Bill took a towel from the table, wound it around Hazel's mouth and tied it at the back of her head.

Then he secured her to the chair with some cord he took from his pocket.

The girl being now helpless, the rascal helped himself to the chatelaine watch she wore on the bosom of her gown, took the diamond drops out of her ears, and the expensive ring from one of her fingers.

He slipped his plunder in his pocket and then went over to help his companion tie up Tom Trowbridge.

"I owe you somethin' myself for that crack you gave me on the nut," said the rascal named Bill, "and I always pay my debts, don't I, Dan?"

"I reckon you do," replied his associate.

"We both owe him somethin'," continued Bill. "What'll we do? Chuck him off the bluff?"

"It's none too good for him, but it doesn't pay to run chances of gettin' your neck stretched," returned Dan. "We don't want to kill him."

"We'll leave him till we finish goin' through the house, then we'll attend to his case," said Bill. "Lock that door so if anybody comes they can't get in."

Dan locked and bolted the door, and then the two rascals left the room through the passage.

Tom sat up and looked at Hazel, and the girl looked at him.

Neither could speak on account of the gags.

The boy's hands were tied behind his back and his ankles were also secured together.

Although comparatively helpless, he did not despair on that account.

He looked around the room and put his ready wits to work.

On the table in the center of the room were a plate, a cup and saucer and a knife and fork, just as Mrs. Dooley had left them after eating her dinner.

She had evidently gone away in a hurry.

Tom saw the handle of the knife projecting over the edge of the table, and the sight of it put an idea into his head.

He dragged himself over to the table, then got on his knees, and then on his feet.

Turning his back to the table, he felt along the edge with his bound hands till he was able to grab the handle of the knife in his fingers.

Then he proceeded to hop toward Hazel in the same way that participants in a sack-race try to cover ground.

It took some little skill to maintain his balance, but he succeeded.

When he reached the girl he looked at the way she was bound to the chair.

If the rascals did not reappear too soon he believed he could free Hazel, and then it would be an easy matter for her to release him from the cord.

Grabbing the blade of the knife firmly between his fingers, with the edge out, he applied it to one of the cords.

It took him but a few moments to cut the cord through. Hazel, who easily understood what he was about, pulled her right hand free and tore the towel from her mouth.

"Give me the knife, Tom, and I will cut you loose."

Tom worked around so she could take the knife and use it on his cords.

In less than a minute his hands were free.

"You're a brick, Hazel," he said, after getting rid of the gag. "I'll do the rest."

It was but the work of a moment to cut the cord about his ankles, then he released the girl from the chair.

Going to the open passage door, he listened.

The two men were rummaging about upstairs with poor luck, as Mrs. Dooley's possessions were not very valuable. Tom then shot back the bolt on the outer door and unlocked it.

"Do you think they can catch us before we can get away in the phaeton?" she asked him. "We can't drive fast down the bluff."

"Are you willing to take a chance with me?" he asked her. "What do you mean?"

"You're a plucky little girl. I'd like to capture those tramps and turn them over to the authorities. Remember the chap who bound you has all your valuables."

"Oh, dear; that would be too dangerous for us to attempt," she remonstrated.

"I'm not sure of that. If they are not captured they may lay for us the next time we come out here, and we come frequently, you know, of an afternoon, for they seem to be revengeful rascals."

"What are you thinking of doing?"

"There's a club yonder that I'll use. You can take that rolling-pin which is weighty enough to crack a man's skull. We'll lay for them when they come back to this room, and take them by surprise. I'll guarantee to knock one of them out at the first blow, and you ought to make the other chap sick till I can jump in and settle him. Then we'll tie them up the way they served me. Mrs. Dooley ought to be back soon, and she'll take care of them till I send the constables out to take charge of them."

It was a daring thing to do, and Hazel was rather nervous about attempting it, but finally, like the brave little girl she was, she agreed to help Tom.

"You take the second one," whispered Tom, as they took up their positions on either side of the passage door.

Presently they heard the two rascals coming downstairs.

They were in bad humor because they had picked up nothing of value in the house.

"We'll pickle that young monkey now," Tom heard the man Dan say. "We'll tie him to one of the trees outside and welt the life half out of him."

"You will—I don't think," chuckled Tom. "Not unless your head is much harder than this club."

The men shuffled along toward the kitchen.

Dan entered the room first, and no sooner had he crossed the threshold of the door than Tom felled him to the floor.

He went down like an ox and lay there motionless.

The man Bill halted in stupefied surprise, only to face a heavy rolling-pin that hurtled through the air and hit him a whack in the upper part of the chest that staggered him.

Before he could recover his wits Tom settled his hash

with a tap that made him see so many stars that he concluded to go to sleep.

"Hurrah!" shouted Tom. "We've got them dead to rights. Now I'll secure them."

There was cord aplenty to do that with, and when the rascals recovered their senses they found themselves helpless.

By that time Hazel had her watch, and ring, and earrings on again, just as if they had never left her.

As the rascals had not been gagged they began to say things that caused the girl to open the kitchen door and step outside.

They swore at Tom and threatened all kinds of trouble for him.

"You might as well save your breaths, both of you. You're slated for the county jail, and I'll bet Major Nutte will make it hot for you for the indignities you offered his daughter."

At that moment Tom heard Hazel talking to some one outside, and soon after the girl re-entered the house with Mrs. Dooley.

Mrs. Dooley was an Irish lady who never looked for a scrap, but could hold her end up if a row was forced upon her.

"So them are the blackguards who assaulted you and the young lady," she said to Tom, as she looked on the bound ruffians. "Sure, it's sorry I am I was away whin they came here, or I'd have made them look two ways for Sunday, faith, I would. Ye have got him nicely trussed up, like a pair of pigs in a poke, so ye have. And what do ye intend to be afther doin' with them?"

"I want you to see that they don't get away from here till I can send the constables after them in a wagon."

"Get away, is it? I'd like to see them," replied the Irish-woman. "Sure, I could kape watch on them with one eye, so I could."

"You won't mind the trouble, will you, Mrs. Dooley?" said Tom.

"Trouble, faith! Sure, it's no trouble at all. I'll see that they're here whin the polacemin come."

"Thank you, Mrs. Dooley. Then Miss Nutte and I will lose no time getting back."

Tom took Hazel by the arm and led her to the phaeton. Assisting her in, he untied the pony, and getting in himself, proceeded to drive down the road.

They were soon spinning up the road toward her home.

He left her at her gate and went on in the vehicle to the office of the head constable in Englewood.

The guardian of the peace was on hand and heard Tom's story.

Then he lost no time in getting his rig in readiness for the trip to the bluff, while Tom drove back to Major Nutte's.

The major was as mad as a hornet over the treatment Hazel had been subjected to by the tramps, and he said he would see they got all that was coming to them.

Tom remained to supper, as he often did these days, and then mounting his wheel drove to the hotel, where his duties began at eight o'clock.

CHAPTER IX.

FRANK FLEETWOOD, CIVIL ENGINEER.

The head constable and one of his deputies went out to the bluff and brought the two tramps back to Englewood with them.

They spent the night in the village lock-up, and next morning were arraigned for examination before the justice.

Tom and Hazel were present to press the charge against them, and Major Nutte was on hand to see that they were remanded for trial.

The justice's office overflowed with spectators drawn there out of curiosity.

The ruffians having pleaded "not guilty," Tom went to the witness chair and told his story.

His testimony was corroborated by Hazel.

One of the rascals endeavored to make light of their offense, but no one believed his excuses.

The justice held them for trial, and that afternoon they

were taken to Preston, the county seat, where they were put in jail to await the next term of the Circuit Court.

It was about this time that an advertisement appeared in several of the more important Chicago newspapers asking bids for the construction of a dam across the Ste. Marie River.

Specifications were to be seen at the company's office in Sault Ste. Marie, and bids, accompanied by a certified check for \$20,000, had to be submitted on or before September 1.

A week later Tom and Hazel made another visit to the bluff.

This time the girl rode Queen Bess and Tom went on his wheel.

They found several men making measurements, and doing a lot of figuring, in the immediate vicinity of the new dam site.

They had a printed copy of the specifications and several blueprints with them.

"I guess that crowd consists of an contractor and his assistants getting the necessary data for a bid on the new dam," said Tom, pointing towards the group.

"Yes. Papa said this morning that a young man from Chicago would be up here to-day with some other men to figure on a contract price for building the dam," replied Hazel.

"And there will be others later, for it is a job worth bidding on."

Tom and the girl went to the top of the bluff, as usual, and sat down under the shade of a tree near the edge facing the river.

They talked together in a chummy way and watched the movements of the men near the dam site.

Hazel had forgotten all about that secret she was so eager to learn at the time Tom spoke about it, and the boy was glad that she did not take it up again.

Tom was always very happy when in Hazel's society, and she seemed equally contented to be with him.

Their friendship grew stronger every time they came together, and there was no doubt that Hazel greatly admired the stalwart, good-looking and manly boy who had saved her life.

As for Tom, he had reached the conclusion that the girl was absolutely necessary to his future happiness, and he made up his mind to win her love if he could.

While the well-matched pair were enjoying their tete-a-tete under the tree the men finished their work and piled their surveying instruments and other apparatus into a light wagon and prepared to leave the spot.

One of them, who seemed to be in charge of the party, walked ahead as far as the bluff and began to examine its face with a look of interest.

He climbed up here and there and looked at the rock, breaking off pieces, and, after studying their composition, put them in his pocket.

Tom watched the young man with a satisfied smile.

He was satisfied that he would hunt up the owner of the bluff and try to see if he could buy it.

Other contractors would probably do the same, so that his aunt might expect more than one flattering offer for the property.

There wasn't the least doubt that the man controlling the bluff could easily underbid his competitors and secure the contract for building the dam.

At length the young man walked up on top of the bluff and knocked at the door of the house.

Mrs. Dooley answered the summons.

"I beg your pardon, madam, but may I ask who is the owner of this property?" he inquired, politely.

"Mrs. Mary Dean."

"Does she live here?"

"No, sir. Sure, she lives in Englewood, on Madison Strate. Her nephew, Tom Trowbridge, is sated under that tree yonder with a young lady. Faith, he can tell ye all about the place, sor."

So the young man went over to interview Tom.

"Are you Tom Trowbridge?" he asked.

"That's my name," replied the boy, getting up.

"Your aunt, Mrs. Dean, owns this property, I understand?"

"She does," replied Tom.

"Has she ever had any idea of selling it?"

"No, sir."

"How many acres does she own?"

"Only the bluff, about fifty acres."

"It does not seem to be adapted for growing anything."

"Poultry is about the only thing grown here."

"Do you think your aunt would consider an offer for the property?"

"No, for the bluff really belongs to me."

"Indeed. Then perhaps it cannot be disposed of until you come of age. Is that the way the matter stands?" asked the young man, looking disappointed.

"Not exactly. But I can positively say that the bluff is not for sale. Are you a contractor?"

"No, I am a civil engineer. My name is Frank Fleetwood. I intend to put a bid in for the new dam same as any contractor. If I am successful in securing the job I will then be a full-fledged contractor as a matter of course."

The young man, who was good-looking and gentlemanly, spoke frankly, and Tom took a liking for him on the spot.

"Why do you want to buy this property?" he asked.

Fleetwood hesitated, as if he didn't want to admit what he was after.

"Isn't it because this bluff would furnish you with the stone you would need to build the dam?" went on Tom.

"Yes. That's my reason for wishing to buy the place. But if I can't purchase it I take it for granted that no other contractor will be able to do so, either."

"That's correct. I control this bluff. My purpose is to sell the stone to the successful bidder at a price lower than he can bring similar rock to this place. If you want to make an offer on those lines I will consider it."

"You would have to employ a gang of men to blast the rock out in a proper way. Why not let me make you an offer for the property as it stands?"

"Because I have use for it after the bluff shall have been cut away."

"Then you expect to blast the stone out and sell it to the man who builds the dam?" said Fleetwood.

"That's it, exactly."

"Then I will make you an offer for the rock per ton. Where shall I send you a letter?"

"You can send it care of the Bay View Hotel. I am night clerk at that house."

"Indeed! I am going to stop there for a day or two, and will therefore have an opportunity for seeing you again, Mr. Trowbridge."

"Very well," replied Tom. "I shall be pleased to meet you again."

Fleetwood bowed and turned away to retrace his steps to the road below, where his wagon was waiting, while Tom rejoined Hazel under the tree.

CHAPTER X.

TOM MAKES A PROPOSITION.

While Tom was on his way from the cottage to the hotel that evening, his mind filled with visions of the anticipated profit he expected to get out of the stone that composed the bulk of the bluff, a new idea suddenly occurred to him.

A brilliant idea it was, too, and the very nerve of it almost took his breath away.

The scheme he thought of was this:

Instead of selling the stone even at a big profit, why not try to get a half interest in the contract to build the dam?

If he combined with the young engineer the latter would be in a position to put in a lower bid than any other contractor could possibly do and make a profit on the job.

Then the contract was bound to be awarded to the firm of Fleetwood & Trowbridge.

Fleetwood would look after the engineering part of the work, while the junior partner would superintend the quarry end.

Tom was so taken with the plan that he determined to speak with Frank Fleetwood that evening on the subject if the opportunity offered.

If the young engineer considered the proposal in a favorable light he would make an appointment with him on the following afternoon to go into the details.

He saw Fleetwood on the broad veranda talking to another guest when he entered the hotel, but the young engineer did not enter the rotunda where the office was until

half-past ten, when he stepped up to the desk to get the key of his room.

"Glad to see you again, Trowbridge," he said, with a cheerful smile. "I will trouble you for the key of No. 61."

"Certainly," replied Tom, reaching for the pigeon-hole where it reposèd. "By the way, have you a moment or two to spare, Mr. Fleetwood?"

"Why not? I was just going to bed, and it makes no difference to me when I go."

"Well, I've a proposition to make you with reference to the dam that you are intending to submit a bid for," began Tom.

"You mean about the stone for building the dam."

"I mean about the whole thing. You may think me rather cheeky, but I can't help it. I'm out to do business on the most profitable basis."

"Well, what is your proposition?" smiled the young engineer.

"Leaving the matter of the stone at the bluff out of your calculations altogether, what chance do you think you will stand of getting the dam contract?"

"That would be hard to say. The lowest responsible bid will, of course, scoop the job. I have superintended a number of big contracts in the interests of other people, chiefly for Sherlock & Mosby, with whom I've been employed for several years. Recently I had a break with the firm and am trying to branch out as a contractor for myself. While I consider myself perfectly competent to make out a bid and carry the contract through to a successful conclusion if I should get it, still there are many things I'm up against. Sherlock & Mosby, I understand, are going to put in a bid on the dam, and I expect to see Sherlock and an engineer up here to-morrow to look the ground over. The firm has been in the contracting business over twenty years, and owing to their facilities will probably be able to figure closer than I can if I cannot get your stone at a price that will enable me to make an exceptionally low bid. I might as well admit to you right now, for I have figured the matter out since I talked with you on the bluff, and have come to the conclusion that unless you are willing to help me out a little I will be out of it."

"Suppose all you had to do was to consider the cost of quarrying the stone out of the bluff, how would that affect your bid?" asked Tom.

"Why, I could easily underbid Sherlock & Mosby, or any other contractor," replied Fleetwood, "because I'd have the material on the spot. That would make a mighty big difference. To bring the stone required for the work from the nearest quarry, as I have been figuring on, will cost a whole lot of money. The man who can get his stone from your bluff will control the situation."

"That's the way I look at it. As the case stands now, every contractor who comes down here to estimate on the dam will consider the bluff as an important factor in the case, and I shall get offers from them all for the ground. Under no consideration will I part with the property, though I am prepared to dispose of the rock above a certain level, which would be all any contractor would care for. Now, my proposition is this: That we go into partnership as contractors—you to furnish the expert experience and I to furnish the stone in the bluff as it stands. The partnership can be limited to this one job, or it can be extended to take in the other improvements on which bids will subsequently be asked."

"What are the other improvements?"

Tom told him about the factories and the homes for the workingmen that were to be put up.

Fleetwood looked at Tom in surprise.

"That would be a mighty big contract to tackle. It looks like a million-dollar job."

"I have no doubt it would cost close on to that sum."

"And you are actually taking that into consideration in proposing this partnership?"

"I am. I am out for everything in sight."

"The firm bidding on that work would probably be required to furnish a bond or the cash for ten per cent. of the estimated cost."

"You could leave that part of the matter to me, Mr. Fleetwood," replied Tom, coolly. "However, I don't wish to discuss other issues just now. The only question before us at present is—will you take me into partnership on the dam? If you agree, I will guarantee that we get the job at a good profit. I may as well tell you that I have con-

siderable influence in a very important quarter. Major Nutte, the president and general manager of the Ste. Marie River Corporation, is a friend of mine, and is just aching to do me a favor. If it was the question between our bid and that of another firm equally low, his vote would be cast with the side in which I was interested. So, you see, it will not be necessary to put in an exceptionally low bid to get the contract, but one which the possession of the bluff will enable you to draw up with the certainty of being lower than that of any contractor who will have to figure on getting the stone from a distance. Now you have my plan in a nutshell. Sleep on it and let me have your answer to-morrow. Call on me at my aunt's cottage any time after one o'clock. It's on Madison Street in the village, and anybody will direct you to Mrs. Dean's."

"Upon my word, Trowbridge, your proposition has astonished me," replied the young engineer. "I have never met such a business-like young fellow of your years. There are features about your offer that entitle it to my earnest consideration, and that it shall have. I am bound to say that I have taken a great fancy to you personally. There is something about you that attracts me. I may as well say right now that I look upon your proposal with favor. I will meet you to-morrow and we will talk the matter over. Then I should like to take the boss stone-mason I brought with me out to the bluff and examine the ground as thoroughly as possible."

"All right," replied Tom. "I think you will find that it will be greatly to your advantage to go into this deal with me. Just as it will be to my advantage to be connected with you, since you have the experience which I lack. It will make a whole lot of difference to us both if we don't come together, but in any case I shall make a good thing out of the bluff, and a small fortune afterward out of the ground which, through my pull with the major, will become part of the village."

"You seem to be an uncommonly smart young man," replied Fleetwood, "and if I take a partner that's the kind of person I want with me. Well, good-night. I will meet you to-morrow at one o'clock at your home and we will go all over the matter. I have an idea that we will hitch if the prospects are really as rosy as I imagine they will prove to be after a thorough sifting of all the conditions of the case."

CHAPTER XI.

TOM RECEIVES A FLATTERING OFFER FOR THE BLUFF.

Frank Fleetwood called on Tom next day at one o'clock, and they had a long and earnest conversation on the matter of the partnership and the construction of the dam.

At three o'clock they rode out to the bluff on the wagon with the boss mason, and the party spent some time going over the ground and examining the limestone outcroppings.

Another contractor, with two assistants, was making notes at the dam site, and Fleetwood recognized the gentleman, who was expensively dressed, as Job Sherlock, head of the contracting firm of Sherlock & Mosby, of Chicago.

While Tom and his companions were inspecting the bluff Mr. Sherlock took note of their presence on the scene and walked down to see what they were doing.

He had incidentally noticed the rocky eminence when he first came out there, and intended to have a look at it.

"Hello, Fleetwood," he said, rather gruffly, when he came up, "what are you doing out here?"

"Looking this bluff over, Mr. Sherlock," replied the young engineer, politely.

"Who does the property belong to?"

"It belongs to a Mrs. Dean."

"She lives in that house up there, I suppose?"

"No, sir. She resides in Englewood."

"Ah, just so."

Mr. Sherlock said no more for a while, but busied himself examining the indications of the presence of limestone all along the bluff.

Finally he rejoined Tom and his party.

"Look here, Fleetwood, are you working in the interests of some contractor contemplating putting in a bid for that dam?"

"Just at present I'm looking after the interests of the new firm of Fleetwood & Trowbridge."

"Indeed!" replied Mr. Sherlock, with a tinge of sarcasm in his tones. "Civil engineers, I presume?"

"And contractors," added Fleetwood, with a smile.

"Humph! You are down here to estimate on the dam I take it?"

"That is my mission."

Mr. Sherlock grinned.

"What chance do you expect to stand against our firm?" he asked, aggressively.

"That will be seen when the bids are opened on September 1."

"You are figuring on using this rock, maybe, if you are so fortunate as to land the contract?" continued Mr. Sherlock, in an unpleasant voice, for he saw the possibilities that lay in the bluff, and mentally determined to try and get his own hooks in by outbidding Fleetwood for the property.

"I was merely looking the bluff over to see whether the material for building the dam could be got out of it," replied Fleetwood.

"Just so," replied Mr. Sherlock, rubbing his chin.

The young engineer knew what that action meant, for he had seen Sherlock do it time and again when he was annoyed and meditated some sharp move.

Fleetwood, however, was not worried, for he knew he had a cinch on the bluff.

Although he and Trowbridge were not yet actually partners, they had come to an arrangement which needed only the drawing up of the papers to make the firm a legal one.

Mr. Sherlock accompanied them over the bluff and took mental notes of all he saw.

He was satisfied that he must buy the bluff if it was to be gotten at a fair price.

At any rate, he was determined that no other contractor should get ahead of him in the matter.

While Tom, Fleetwood and the mason sat down under one of the trees at the summit of the bluff, Mr. Sherlock returned to his companions.

Shortly afterward he and his assistants got into his automobile and started for Englewood.

"Sherlock is going to hunt your aunt up and make her an offer for the bluff," said Fleetwood, as the three watched the Sherlock party disappear up the road.

"I'm afraid he's only wasting his time," grinned Tom. "Fleetwood & Trowbridge are going to use this rock when the firm gets the contract to build the dam."

The party remained half an hour longer on the bluff and then returned to the village.

After putting the wagon up at the stable, Fleetwood and the mason went on to the hotel, while Tom returned home.

"There was a gentleman here about an hour ago who is very anxious to buy the bluff," said his aunt. "He offered me \$3,000 for it."

"Said his name was Sherlock, didn't he?" said Tom, quietly.

"Why, yes; that's the name he gave me. You have seen him, then?"

"I met him out at the bluff, but was not introduced to him."

"I told him that you were the one who had all the say about the bluff. That while the property was in my name it was really yours. Then he said he would be here early this evening to talk with you about it."

"If he doesn't call before half-past seven he won't see me. If he calls later you can tell him that the bluff is not for sale at any price."

Mr. Sherlock called, however, at a few minutes after seven.

He was surprised, and perhaps a little disconcerted, to recognize Tom as the boy he had that afternoon seen in company with Fleetwood at the bluff.

"My name is Sherlock," he said, brusquely. "I have called to see if I can make a deal with you for the purchase of the bluff by the river."

"The bluff is not for sale," replied Tom, politely.

"I am willing to pay you \$3,000 for it. That's twice as much as it's worth to anybody but me," said the contractor, paying no attention to his answer.

"No, sir. I wouldn't take \$3,000 for it."

"Then I'll make you another proposition. I'll give you that for the privilege of taking out all the stone I may need in the building of the dam."

"Are you sure of getting the contract for building it?" asked Tom, with a slight smile.

"I am willing to take the chances of getting it. I will pay you \$1,000 down on account of the stone privilege," went on Mr. Sherlock. "The balance to be paid on September 15."

Tom, however, declined his offer.

"May I ask how you expect to do any better, young man?" asked the contractor, in a nettled tone.

"I shall have to decline answering that question."

"Am I to understand that Fleetwood made you a better offer? If he did, I advise you to go slow before you commit yourself. In dealing with me you are doing business with one of the most responsible contracting firms of Chicago," said Mr. Sherlock, with a consequential expanding of his broad chest, on which glowed a big diamond pin, easily worth \$1,000. "Fleetwood has no responsibility as far as I am aware of. Until lately he was in the employ of our firm as a civil engineer, but we found it convenient to let him go. Shall I draw up a memorandum for you to sign and hand you my check for the thousand on account?" continued the contractor, putting his hand in his coat pocket.

"No, sir, for I cannot accept your offer."

"You cannot accept \$3,000 for the stone in the bluff?" almost gasped Mr. Sherlock. "Why, the ground will be improved a hundred per cent. after that bluff is cut away, and you will have the money to boot."

"I am aware of that fact, sir; but if there is any cutting away to be done I think it will be done under my supervision."

"Under your supervision?"

"Yes, sir."

"Are you aware that it will cost a lot of money to blast the rock out of the bluff? The offer I'm making you throws that expense on my shoulders. You will get your property practically cleared of the rock for nothing, with a bonus of \$3,000 thrown in."

"I understand that, sir."

"And you refuse to accept my offer?"

"I do."

"I'll make it \$4,000. How does that strike you?"

"No better than your other offer."

Mr. Sherlock regarded Tom as if he were some new freak which had come under his observation.

"Upon my word, young man, I don't understand you at all," said the contractor, testily. "I have made you a most extraordinarily liberal offer, and yet you turn it down. I cannot for the life of me see how you can do any better, or even as well."

Tom smiled and made no reply.

"Will you take \$5,000?" said Mr. Sherlock, after some cogitation.

"No, sir. I told you at the beginning of this interview that the bluff was not for sale."

"Do you mean by that that you have already closed a deal with Fleetwood?"

"Well, I have made a business arrangement with Mr. Fleetwood which prevents me from disposing of the rock of which the bluff is composed."

"Why didn't you say so at once, then?" demanded the contractor, angrily.

"I told you the bluff was not for sale."

"But you didn't tell me that you had sold the stone, or the property, to Fleetwood," said Mr. Sherlock, aggressively, for he was hot under the collar to think that his late employee had got ahead of him.

"I haven't sold either the stone or the property to Mr. Fleetwood."

"Then what kind of a deal did you make with him?"

"I cannot answer that question, sir."

The contractor was puzzled to understand just how the land lay.

The bluff itself could be of no possible use to the young engineer except so far as it would furnish the material necessary to build the dam in case his bid was accepted by the Ste. Marie River Corporation.

Then the idea occurred to Mr. Sherlock that Fleetwood has secured an option on the bluff with the intention himself of selling the rock to the contractor who would make the highest bid.

That struck him as a more reasonable move on Fleetwood's part than figuring on putting in a bid for building the dam.

He determined to interview his late employee, who he knew was stopping at the Bay View Hotel, on the subject at once, for he was determined to get hold of that stone if it were possible to do so, otherwise he could not see how his firm would be able to submit a successful bid.

"All right, young man," he said, rising from his chair. "I won't take up any more of your time. There is my business card. Should any change happen in your present arrangements you can communicate with me at that address."

That closed the interview, and Mr. Sherlock took his leave.

CHAPTER XII.

TOM SECURES THE PROMISE OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

Mr. Sherlock lost no time in hunting up Frank Fleetwood.

The interview produced no satisfactory results as far as he was concerned.

Next morning he and his companions left Englewood Beach for Chicago.

That same afternoon Tom and Fleetwood went to the office of the justice of the peace in the village and had partnership papers drawn up, which both signed in duplicate in the presence of the justice, who was also a notary.

On the following morning Fleetwood departed for Chicago to make out his bid and get the certified check for \$20,000 which his rich uncle had promised to loan him.

That afternoon Tom wheeled out to the Nutte mansion.

"You bad boy!" cried Hazel, when he presented himself before her; "where have you been for the last five days? Come, now, you must give an account of yourself."

"All right. I'm ready to do that. Did you miss me any, or were you glad to be rid of me for a while?" he asked, regarding her intently.

"I don't know whether I ought to flatter you by saying that I missed you," she said, with a sidelong glance in his face that was particularly fascinating to him.

Those eyes of hers were dangerous weapons, and it required some control on his part to refrain from seizing her in his arms then and there and kissing her.

"Then you didn't miss me?" he said.

"Yes, I did, so there! Are you satisfied?"

"Very much so. Now, listen, and I'll tell you what kept me away. I've great news for you, and I expect you to congratulate me."

Thereupon he told her about the partnership he had entered into with Frank Fleetwood, the young civil engineer.

"I am now the junior partner of the contracting firm of Fleetwood & Trowbridge, and our first business act will be to put in a bid for building the Ste. Marie River dam. What do you think of that?"

"You don't mean it, Tom!" she cried, almost incredulously.

"I do mean it," he replied. "Instead of selling the stone to some other contractor, we're going to use it ourselves, for with the bluff as an asset we should easily be able to put in the lowest bid for the work."

"But can you build the dam according to the specifications?" asked the girl, with a doubtful look.

"Mr. Fleetwood can do it, for he has superintended the construction of two dams already for Sherlock & Mosby, the Chicago contractors, with whom he was associated for over six years. By the way, Mr. Sherlock, of that firm, was up here two days ago figuring on the job. He offered me \$5,000 for the privilege of taking the stone out of the bluff at his own expense."

"That was a pretty good offer, wasn't it?"

"Not so fine when you figure how expensive it would be to furnish the stone at a distance and have it transported here."

"Are you going to tell father about your new business arrangements?"

"Of course. I expect him to see that we get the contract if our bid is the lowest and he finds out on investigation that Mr. Fleetwood is competent to carry out the work right up to the handle."

"What part of the work are you going to look after?"

"The quarrying of the stone. We are going to hire a

competent foreman and a gang of men to do the actual work. The necessary tools and implements will be sent on from Chicago as soon as the contract has been awarded to us. The only real difficulty that I can see before us, and that is no small one, will be to raise the cash to carry on the work. Mr. Fleetwood has a rich uncle, but all he can expect from him is the loan of the \$20,000 forfeit that goes with the bid, and must remain with your father's corporation until the dam is completed and accepted. We'll have to raise quite a sum for working capital. Mr. Fleetwood hasn't much more than enough to buy the drills and other machinery necessary to get the stone out of the bluff; while I—well, you know how much I'm worth. Nothing to speak of, and a debt of \$1,500 due you."

"Oh, that doesn't count, Tom," said Hazel.

"It doesn't? Well, I rather think it does. Though it doesn't worry me a great deal, for I know I will be able to repay you with interest before many moons."

"There isn't to be any interest, Tom."

"Yes, there is—five per cent. It was a business transaction between us, as well as a friendly one, though I didn't have to put up any security."

"Well, Tom, you will have to lay the whole matter before father. I am sure he will see you through if he is satisfied you and your partner can put the work through in a satisfactory manner in case the contract is awarded you. Was that Mr. Fleetwood who introduced himself to you the last time we were at the bluff?"

"Yes. He's a nice fellow."

"He's quite good-looking and very gentlemanly."

"I hope you won't fall in love with him when I introduce you, and give me the shake," said Tom, half earnestly.

"Why, the idea, you foolish boy! Just as if I would," laughed Hazel.

"You never can be sure what a girl will do. She doesn't even know herself half the time."

"Well, I like that!" pouted Hazel. "I am sure I don't call that a compliment."

"Present company is always excepted," said Tom, hastily, for he was afraid his remark might have offended her.

"I should hope so. If I don't know my own mind I'd like to know who does."

"You're not provoked with me for making that statement, are you?" Tom asked, a bit anxiously.

"Oh, no. I know you didn't mean it."

"Of course, I didn't."

Tom then went on to tell her all about the plans of Fleetwood & Trowbridge.

"We want to get in on the other contracts that will be given out later on," he said, with sparkling eyes. "If our work on the dam shows up satisfactorily, as I am sure it will, there is no reason, except the lack of working capital, that need prevent us from putting in a bid for the erection of the factories. Mr. Fleetwood has looked after the erection of buildings of that kind before, and is competent to continue the work. Of course, we won't be in it unless your father helps us out. Still, I'm afraid that will be asking too much of him. If he backs me up on the dam contract it will be as much as I can reasonably expect from him, even for so important a service as saving your life. I am sorry that I have to go to him, anyway, as I would prefer to hoe my own row if possible. But it isn't possible in such a big thing as I and my partner are about to tackle."

"Well, Tom, I cannot say just what father will do, but I know he is very anxious to serve you, and he will do it in every reasonable way. Don't be afraid to explain everything to him, and give him every chance to look into the matter, as he will want to do it in your interest as well as his own."

"Oh, I'll give it to him straight. Tell him I'll be around to-morrow afternoon to see him on important business, that is, if he hasn't any engagement."

"I couldn't tell you whether he has or not, but I'll tell him you want to see him. If he can't see you to-morrow when you come we'll go out and take a ride."

"What's the matter with our taking one to-day, say, in the phaeton? We'll go out to the bluff, as usual, unless you want to go somewhere else."

Hazel was willing to go, and sent an order to the stables to have her pony-phaeton brought around to the front of the house.

Fifteen minutes later they were off down the road.

Next afternoon Tom rode out to the Nutte home again and found the major waiting for him.

Hazel escorted him into the library, where her father was, and left them together.

Tom lost no time in getting down to business.

He astonished Major Nutte by telling him that he had gone into partnership with a smart young Chicago civil engineer who had come up to that neighborhood for the purpose of inspecting the site of the new dam and putting in a bid for the contract of building it.

He told the major how the bluff, which he had purchased at a bargain from Locke, was almost a solid mass of limestone—just the material with which to build the dam.

"The possession of that stone will give us the inside track of every other contractor in making out our bid, so that we calculate on securing the contract through the lowest bid," said Tom, as he warmed up to the subject.

"But, Trowbridge, you are only a boy," remarked the major. "The contract will not be awarded to the lowest bidder unless he or they are perfectly responsible. The company must have some guarantee that the work will be properly and expeditiously executed. One of the conditions is that each bid must be accompanied with a certified check for \$20,000, as an evidence of good faith and responsibility. There will be a penalty clause in the contract that unless the dam is ready for the acceptance of the company within a stipulated time the contractor will forfeit a certain amount for every day that he is behind in his work. The whole sum will be deducted from his deposit after the dam shall have been accepted. The company will have its own engineer to keep tab on the contractor to see that he is doing the work according to the specifications. I'm afraid, my boy, that your ambition has carried you upon a wild goose chase."

"I hope not, sir," replied Tom, respectfully. "My partner is a thoroughly capable engineer, who has been six years in the employ of a big Chicago firm of contractors. He has superintended the building of at least two dams already, and knows his business."

"How did he come to take you into partnership?"

"Because, being the owner of the bluff, I could furnish the stone right on the ground for the dam. The \$20,000 check that is to accompany our bid is already promised to Mr. Fleetwood by his uncle. We will also have funds enough to get the machinery necessary to quarry the bluff. But that's our limit. My object in coming to you to-day was to ask you to back the firm, through me, with capital sufficient to put the contract through if we secure it. You told me that if I ever wanted a favor of you to ask it. Well, I'm asking you now. If you will stand by me in this matter I shall make a raft of money. The fact that my partner will also benefit through any favor extended to me I hope will not count against my request for financial aid. If we can't raise the money to carry the work on, why, we'll lose the chance of a lifetime—at any rate, I will."

Major Nutte had gotten over his surprise and was now somewhat interested in Tom's business aspirations.

He asked the boy how the firm of Fleetwood & Trowbridge proposed to carry on the work in case the contract came their way.

Tom gave him all the facts and figures that he had gotten from his partner on the matter, and told the major about how much working capital the firm stood in need of.

Major Nutte questioned him closely about every point that occurred to him, and the boy, in the main, gave him satisfactory answers.

The interview lasted about two hours, at the end of which time the major had a different opinion of the new firm of contractors.

He assured Tom that if the firm complied with all the requirements of the bid, and the contract to build the dam was awarded to them, he would loan the boy enough money to see them through the job.

"I am satisfied that you have all the elements of success in you, Trowbridge," he said. "It is up to you to utilize them to the best advantage. I am glad to have the opportunity to help you get a good start, and I look to see you win out."

Tom, having carried his point, on which so much hinged, left the library after thanking the major for his assurance to stand by him.

CHAPTER XIII.

TOM ASTONISHES DICK.

Although Tom dropped around to the bathhouses nearly every afternoon to see his friend Dick Bristol, he had never even told his chum that he had gotten possession of the Locke Farm, as the bluff was still designated by the villagers.

His object was to surprise Dick when he got ready for business.

Since he entered into partnership with Fleetwood he had made up his mind to engage Dick as time-keeper and general assistant at the quarry as soon as work was begun on the bluff.

On the morning following his satisfactory interview with Major Nutte, Tom received a small package and a letter by mail with the Chicago postmark.

He knew they came from Mr. Fleetwood.

The letter stated that the young engineer had made out his bid for the building of the dam, and was now waiting for his uncle to return to the city so that he could get the check to enclose with it, then he would send the packet by registered mail to the Ste. Marie River Corporation at Sault Ste. Marie.

He told Tom what the amount of the bid was, and what profit he expected they would make, supposing that his calculations with reference to the cost of quarrying the stone turned out approximately correct.

The difficulty they now had to face was to raise the funds to carry on the work, he said, and he was going to try and fix that up with his uncle.

The package contained 100 business cards, printed as follows:

FLEETWOOD & TROWBRIDGE,
Contractors,
Room 504, Eclipse Bldg., LaSalle Street. Chicago.
Branch Office: Englewood, Mich.

Tom immediately wrote a short letter to his partner, acknowledging the receipt of his letter and the cards, and telling him not to worry about raising the funds to carry on the work if they got the contract as he had already made arrangements to secure all the money necessary for that purpose.

He knew this bit of information would astonish Fleetwood, although Tom had told him he had a good friend in Major Nutte.

Putting half a dozen of his business cards in his pocket, he walked down to the bathhouses to see Dick.

"I might as well take his breath away now as later on, for everything seems to be settled except so far as the getting of the contract is concerned," he chuckled; "and I guess we're almost sure of that, as things stand."

He found Dick in the room where the money was taken in and the bathing-suits given out.

The captain was outside repairing the lock on one of the houses.

"Hello, Tom. Hot day, isn't it?" said Dick, wiping his face with his handkerchief.

"What do you expect in the middle of August?" laughed Tom.

"I meant that to-day is extra warm. All the houses are in use and there are a number of people on the waiting list," and Dick nodded at half a dozen of the hotel guests who were lounging around the door watching the bathers and waiting for a chance to get a bathhouse.

"Which means that you are extra busy."

"Well, I haven't any time to go to sleep," grinned Dick. "Wait here, will you, while I go on the roof and see if the batch of bathing togs up there are dry enough to take in."

"It oughtn't to take them long to dry in this sun," said Tom.

Dick went out by the back door, mounted to the roof, and in a few minutes returned with an armful of suits, which he proceeded to sort out, fold up and stow away on a shelf behind the counter.

"Now I'll have a breathing spell until somebody turns in the key of his bathhouse," he said.

"Two weeks more and you will be out of a job again," said Tom.

"So will you. But we don't need to worry. The wagon works open up again on the 15th of September."

"I'm not worrying. I don't care if the works never open up again."

"You don't!" exclaimed Dick, in astonishment.

"I don't," repeated Tom, nonchalantly.

"Got another and better job in sight?" asked Dick, curiously.

"Yes. I'm in business for myself."

"In business for yourself! What do you mean by that?"

"Can you read?" grinned Tom, taking one of his cards from his vest pocket. "Cast your optics on that bit of pasteboard," and he tossed the card on the counter.

Dick picked it up and glanced at it.

"'Fleetwood & Trowbridge, Contractors,'" he read. "What does this mean?" he went on, looking at Tom in a puzzled way.

"It means what it says."

"That Trowbridge isn't you, just the same," said Dick.

"Isn't it? I was under the impression that it was. Don't you see that our branch office is in Englewood? Do you know of any other Trowbridge in Englewood?"

That reply took the wind out of Dick's sails, so to speak, and he didn't know what to say.

"Who is this Fleetwood?" he finally asked.

"An expert civil engineer, who lives in Chicago."

"And you and he have gone into partnership?" said Dick, still apparently unconvinced.

"That's it exactly. If you don't believe me, ask Justice Cullen. He drew up the papers a few days ago, and we signed them in his presence. Drop into the house to-night around seven and I'll show you my document."

"Now you're kidding me."

"Not a bit of it. I bought the Locke Farm about two months ago. Didn't you see the notice about it in the 'News'?"

"No, I didn't. If I had I should have asked you to explain how you could pay \$1,000 for that bluff."

"I borrowed the money. It cost me \$1,500 altogether, for Locke wanted \$500 extra for the house."

CHAPTER XIV.

FLEETWOOD & TROWBRIDGE WIN THE CONTRACT.

Before the first of September came around Tom had had several more talks with Dick Bristol, and his chum had gradually come to believe that Tom had gotten next to mighty big prospects.

On the 31st of August Tom got a letter from Fleetwood in which the latter told him that he was going to Sault Ste. Marie that day to be present at the opening of the bids on the following afternoon.

Although Tom felt reasonably sure that their bid would prove the lowest presented for the consideration of Major Nutte's syndicate, still he began to feel a bit nervous over the result.

It was possible that his partner, in making his estimate, might have figured some items too high, and that the sum total would equalize or overstep the advantage the new firm possessed in having the stone on the spot.

Or, again, some of their experienced competitors, owing to their superior facilities for undertaking such a big job, might be able to figure lower than Fleetwood calculated on.

The difference of \$1,000, or even \$500, would turn the scale in favor of any bidder.

To say the truth, Tom was afraid of Sherlock & Mosby.

They might put in a bid almost at cost in order to make sure of the contract if they could and euchre their late employee out of it.

The firm was a wealthy one, and could afford to do the work at a loss if there was some special object in it.

Besides, if they got the contract Tom would have to make terms with them for his rock or let it lie as it was, which would mean a big loss to him.

Sherlock, in that case, would take advantage of the situation, and give as little as possible for the material.

Tom knew that his plans for adding the ground under the bluff to the new village would be knocked in the head if the rock was not removed for the dam.

He couldn't afford to blast it out simply to obtain a building site.

Altogether, when the morning of the first day of September dawned he was on pins and needles over the situation.

The hotel didn't close till the 5th of the month, so he had several more nights to put in as clerk in the office.

Most of the season's guests had gone back to their homes, and Dick's job was now a sinecure.

Tom had called on Hazel the afternoon previous and told her how all his plans hung on a thread, as it were, and that if Sherlock & Mosby got the contract he would probably be in the soup.

He was so nervous and worked up about the matter that the girl felt very sorry for him, and tried to assure him.

That night she had an interview with her father and told him all that Tom had said.

She begged him, for her sake, to see that Tom and his partner had a square deal when the bids were opened, and that none of the more experienced contractors be favored unless their bid was actually lower than Fleetwood & Trowbridge's.

The major promised his daughter that the young firm should get the contract if their bid entitled them to it, for he had already made it his business to investigate Frank Fleetwood's reputation as a capable engineer and superintendent, and although Sherlock & Mosby tried to say as little in the young man's favor as they could, they did not dare assert that he was not thoroughly competent in his line of business.

There were other contractors who knew Fleetwood's capabilities and spoke well of him; and the major also interviewed the presidents of several corporations for whom Sherlock & Mosby had done work under Fleetwood's superintendence, and their report was favorable to the young engineer.

When Tom reached the hotel at eight o'clock to resume his duties, a telegram, which had come over the wire to the house two hours before, was handed to him by the day clerk.

Tom's heart beat like a trip-hammer as he tore the envelope open and looked at what he felt was one of the most momentous messages he would ever receive.

For a moment the hotel operator's writing seemed to run together, and he could make out nothing clearly.

Then his vision cleared and he read the following:

"Sault Ste. Marie, Sept. 1.

"To Thomas Trowbridge,

"Bay View Hotel, Englewood Beach, Mich.

"We win by a margin of only \$100 over Sherlock & Mosby. Sherlock entered protest, but it was overruled by Major Nutte. Outside of the major, the syndicate favored Sherlock & Mosby, on account of their reputation and our lack of one. Major Nutte made a speech in which he complimented me as an expert, and insisted that my firm was entitled to the contract. It was finally put to a vote, and we won by a single tally. Your friend carried us through and you can't thank him too much. Look for me to-morrow.

"Fleetwood."

Just then Dick strolled into the rotunda and up to the desk.

"Hello, Tom; what makes you look so happy?"

"Read that telegram and you'll understand why my spirits are trying to get up through the top of my head."

Dick read it.

"Let me be the first to congratulate you, old chap," he said, holding out his hand.

Tom seized it and they shook like good fellows.

"I s'pose you'll get down to business before long," said Dick.

"Yes. Fleetwood will be here to-morrow, and then I'll know just how soon he intends to set the ball rolling."

"Well, I'm ready to start in whenever you say, Tom. I'd sooner work for you than anybody else."

"You won't lose anything by working for Fleetwood & Trowbridge, I can assure you. I'll take care of you, and push you ahead as circumstances permit."

"It's funny to think of you as my boss. I was telling the folks about the possibility of it the other night, and mother and sis laughed. They said they hoped you would succeed in getting the contract, as you were a first-class fellow."

"I'm much obliged to them for their good opinion. By the way, have you got your wheel outside?"

"Yes. Why?"

"Have you any objection to going out to Major Nutte's house at this hour?"

"I'll go if you wish me to."

"All right. Wait a moment."

Tom scribbled a few words to Hazel and enclosed his partner's telegram with the note in one of the hotel envelopes, which he addressed "Miss Hazel Nutte."

"There you are, Dick. Deliver that at the major's house and I'll be under a big obligation to you."

Dick took it, placed it in his pocket, and a minute later was on the road to the nabob's home.

CHAPTER XV.

CONCLUSION.

With the last week in September blasting operations were begun at the upper end of the bluff.

Only a small gang under a foreman was employed at first, and the men were boarded at the farmhouse on the top of the bluff and lodged in a building built for the purpose out of the lumber taken from the outbuildings and erected on low ground at the opposite end of Tom's property.

The carpenter and builder employed by Fleetwood & Trowbridge declared that it would be quite practicable to remove the farmhouse, as it stood to the bottom of the bluff, and it was decided to do this when the blasting operations got well under way.

Tom and his aunt took up their residence at the farmhouse, with Mrs. Dooley as housekeeper and Mike as general helper, so as to be on the ground all the time.

Dick also boarded with them, and so did Fleetwood, when the operations on the dam were begun.

When things got going in ship-shape style, and more men came there to work, another building was erected at the foot of the bluff, and regular arrangements were made to feed the men in that building.

Things went along in fine shape up to the latter part of October, when the blasting gang was largely increased.

The men were brought from Sault Ste. Marie by Fleetwood, and Tom didn't fancy the looks of several of them, especially a stalwart, mahogany-featured chap named Bill Hoogley.

He stood six feet in his stockings, and a wicked expression seemed to hover about his jet-black eyes.

"Say, Tom," said Dick, one morning, "Hoogley is mighty chummy with the greater part of our gang. It's my opinion he's trying to make it so hot for Foreman Brown that he'll leave. I heard him tell one of the chaps the other day that he'd be the foreman here before the month was up."

"You heard him say that, did you?" replied Tom.

"I did. Between you, me and the post, I don't like Hoogley for a cent. I think he's a bad man from Badville. I'd be willing to bet you'll have trouble through him before long. He's up to something. Whether he's merely conniving to get the foremanship, or he has some other object in view, I can't say for certain. I advise you to keep your eye on him. I will as far as I can in your interest. Better have a talk with your partner on the subject when he gets back from Sault Ste. Marie."

"I'll attend to it."

They talked the matter over for half an hour more and then went to bed.

Next morning when Bill Hoogley and his three cronies started to work in the quarry as usual Dick handed each of them a blue envelope containing their week's wages and told them they were laid off indefinitely.

"Laid off!" roared Hoogley. "Who says so?"

"Trowbridge says so. I am carrying out his orders," replied Dick.

"What does this mean?" glowered Hoogley, striding up to Tom, while his associates remained in the background. "Your timekeeper handed us these envelopes and says we're discharged."

"It means that I don't require your services any more. The wagon will be ready to take you to Preston shortly, where you can catch a train back to Sault Ste. Marie, where you came from."

"What's your reason for dischargin' us?"

"My reason is that you're here for no good purpose. I have found out that Mr. Job Sherlock sent you here to work trouble for us."

"It's a lie!" cried Hoogley, who was nevertheless staggered by the accusation.

"It's no lie. You met Mr. Sherlock last night and went with him up to the site of the dam. There you had a conversation with him, which I overheard. You arranged to blow up the caisson some dark night as soon as you could get hold of the dynamite to do it with. You are a snake in the dark, and I won't have any reptiles around here while this contract is going on. That's all I've got to say. You and your crowd had better leave quietly or I'll expose you and Mr. Sherlock in a way you won't like."

As Tom concluded, Hoogley uttered a howl of anger and struck the boy to the ground.

As the young contractor lay dazed the ruffian seized him in his arms and dropped him feet first into a shallow hole close by.

Then seizing his shovel, he began to throw the earth in around him as fast as he could work, and in a few minutes had the boy buried up to his chest.

"I'll fix you, you young whippersnapper!" roared the rascal. "You'll not tell any lies on me and Sherlock, you kin bet your bottom dollar! I'll pickle you, dern you, if I hang for it!"

The big fellow was clearly in a murderous mood, and it would have gone hard with Tom but for the fact that help was at hand.

"You rascal, what are you up to?" cried Dick Bristol, springing from the hedge and dealing Bill Hoogley a stunning blow with his club.

Down went the ruffian, while his companion, with cries of rage, rushed to his assistance.

The scrap that followed was brief, and Hoogley's pals were knocked down and held by Brown and the laborers.

Dick got rope from the shed and they, together with the unconscious Hoogley, were tied up hand and foot.

Tom was quickly dug out of the hole, and he ordered that the four rascals be conveyed to the farmhouse and held there under guard until he could get the constables from Englewood to come out and take charge of them.

When the three associates of Hoogley saw how determined they were to confess the particulars of the plot in which they mined Tom was to have them punished, they weakened and were all engaged if he would let them off.

Tom consented.

Their statements were taken down in writing by the young contractor in the presence of Brown, and they signed their names to it, the foreman witnessing the paper.

The four rascals were then sent to Preston in the light wagon and put aboard a train for Sault Ste. Marie.

When the constables arrived from the village Tom told them that the trouble had been patched up, and the men implicated had been sent back whence they came.

He paid the officers for their trouble of coming out on a bootless errand and the incident was closed.

When Fleetwood returned he was greatly astonished to learn the particulars of what had happened during his absence.

He was surprised and indignant at the part Mr. Sherlock had taken in the outrage, and wrote that gentleman a significant letter, in which he stated that he had evidence in black and white, signed by Bill Hoogley and his associates, which, if published, would compromise the firm of Sherlock & Mosby to a very considerable extent.

The facts, however, would be suppressed if Mr. Sherlock minded his own business in the future, and left Fleetwood & Trowbridge alone.

Sherlock had a fit on receipt of the communication and tried to find Hoogley.

That worthy thought fit to keep away from Chicago, and the contractor's efforts to get into communication with him failed.

Fleetwood & Trowbridge had no further trouble in connection with the building of the dam, which was duly completed to the satisfaction of the corporation.

The greater part of Tom's rock was used in its construction, and the balance was employed in the foundations of the factories, the contracts for which Fleetwood & Trowbridge secured also.

They also put in a bid for the houses to be put up for the accommodation of the workmen, and secured it without any competition, as the firm was now in high favor with the corporation, owing to the excellent manner in which they had fulfilled their former contracts.

A period of two years elapsed from the beginning of work on the dam until the big railroad car shops and other buildings were completed and the dwelling houses were under way, and by that time the bank account of the contracting firm of Fleetwood & Trowbridge showed a considerable balance, well up in the thousands, in their favor.

Tom had already interested Major Nutte in his plan of adding the fifty acres of rock-cleared ground to the prospective town, for it was definitely settled that the place was to become more than a mere village.

Its name was to be St. Marie, and the major was to be its guiding genius.

By this time the railroad company advertised for bids to build the twenty-one miles of track from the town of Preston, on the main line, direct to Englewood, through Ste. Marie, and Fleetwood & Trowbridge got the contract for that, too.

This contract also called for three stations and various necessary additions.

By the time the construction of the branch line was well under way, work was begun by the Ste. Marie Corporation (the word "River" being dropped from their corporate title) on the car shops.

Enough houses were erected by this time to accommodate the initial force, and as fast as others were finished more hands were added to the shops.

One of the factories were leased to the parties for whom they were putting up the village, as it was called for the present, of Ste. Marie, presented every appearance of a thriving hive of industry.

Tom Trowbridge was twenty-two years old when the first train ran over the new Preston & Englewood branch line.

It was a gala day at Englewood Village, for railroad connection with the Minneapolis, St. Paul & Sault Ste. Marie line was what the inhabitants had been looking forward to for years.

Everybody in the county knew of Tom Trowbridge's rise from nothing to a partnership in the now well-known and important contracting firm of Fleetwood & Trowbridge, and the village of Englewood was proud of him, notwithstanding that hereafter he was to be identified with the rival burg of Ste. Marie, where the firm now had its branch office.

During the progress of the three years' work between the time the dam was begun and the branch line completed and opened, Tom and Hazel saw each other in the summer and at the Christmas holidays, for during the rest of the time the fair girl was being educated at a well-known woman's college in the East.

They corresponded regularly, however, and the interest each had in the other grew with separation and the lapse of time.

The major and his wife had long foreseen what the friendship between their daughter and the rising young contractor was leading to, and had decided that Tom possessed all the requisites of an eligible son-in-law, consequently when the young man asked Major Nutte for Hazel he was told he could have her.

They were married soon after her graduation in June, and had a swell wedding at the Nutte home.

After their return from their wedding trip they went to live with the bride's parents, for as Tom had to be away often on business trips, Hazel naturally preferred to remain with her mother and father to having a home of her own.

Tom undoubtedly made a raft of money out of his lucky contract and those which followed it, and to-day he is a rich man, while the firm of Fleetwood & Trowbridge is regarded as one of the most important contracting concerns in the Middle West.

Next week's issue will contain "A BIG RISK; OR, THE GAME THAT WON."

SEND POSTAL FOR OUR FREE CATALOGUE

CURRENT NEWS

After being completely buried at the bottom of an eighteen-foot ditch for 20 minutes, Wayne Richardson, a laborer from Clay Centre, Kan., who was working on the construction work in the draining district of North Lawrence, was rescued alive without apparent injury one day recently.

Fear of compulsory military service has resulted in an exodus of foreigners from Canada to the United States. The migration, chiefly from the cities, has interfered seriously with many Canadian industries. In order to keep the workmen in Canada the Dominion Government has issued a statement that compulsory military service is not under consideration.

Almost 8,000,000 trees will be available for next spring's reforesting operations from the stock now in the Pennsylvania State Forest nurseries. This is an increase in production over last year of about 30 per cent., and is the largest number of seedlings ever grown in the nurseries. Last year private individuals planted 1,500,000 trees furnished by the Department.

Three hundred persons have been killed and many injured in a disastrous earthquake in central Formosa, according to special despatches from Taihoku, the capital of Formosa. It is estimated that 1,000 houses have been destroyed. The city of Nanto has been damaged extensively by fire. The island of Formosa lies between the Philippine Islands and Japan and is owned by Japan. The city of Nanto is situated in the central part of the island, about 100 miles south of Taihoku.

For discriminating against two uniformed enlisted men of the U. S. Navy in refusing to allow them to sit in a box for which they had purchased tickets, Henry Traub, lessee of a theatre in Brooklyn, N. Y., was fined \$250 by the Justices of the Special Sessions Court, in that New York city borough, on January 11. In fining Traub, Justice McInerney said: "The uniform of a United States sailor must be respected. A sailor has just as much rights as any civilian." Before sentencing the defendant, Justice McInerney read a communication from Rear Admiral Nathaniel R. Usher, commandant of the navy yard, New York, in which adequate punishment was urged. Admiral Usher feared the effect on the present preparedness movement in the event that discriminations against United States uniforms were allowed to go unpunished.

Linton Watters of Georgia, who returned recently on the Trinidad liner Maraval, reported that he had found aluminum deposits in Dutch Guiana. He

made a ten months' prospecting trip far up the great rivers of Guiana looking for pay dirt. "As the aluminum beds of Tennessee, Georgia and Arkansas show signs of giving out," said he, "we have got to hunt up new deposits. I made a prospecting trip of 200 miles up the Surinam River, after getting a provisional concession from the Dutch authorities. Our party found bauxite and other mineral deposits from which aluminum can be extracted. These new fields may be very rich and may mean a good deal to those interested in the aluminum market just now with the American deposits on the down grade. Undoubtedly the Dutch authorities will give us a concession to develop the new fields."

Electrical fire logs, which have been used on the stage for several years, are now available for other uses. These fire logs are made of imitation wood, consisting of three or more logs naturally grouped for interior fireplaces and outdoor camp-fires. The logs are of translucent material and asbestos, reinforced with metal, and are made hollow for the insertion of electric bulbs. The bark and cut ends of the logs are artistically designed and hand painted to give the natural appearance of partially burned logs. By properly shading the translucent and opaque parts and providing for reflection from below, the logs when illuminated glow with the natural bright and darker shading of burning wood logs. The fire logs can also be obtained in the form of a large wood log with imitation ash heap, for large old-fashioned fire-places.

In accordance with the experience of the war, the gun practice of our battleships has been carried out at ranges far in excess of any heretofore prescribed. A comparison with the year 1914, when full charges were used in guns, shows results gratifying to the Navy Department. The individual practice of the main battery guns was conducted at a mean range of over 15,000 yards, as compared with a mean range of 10,000 yards, with the same guns in 1914. In spite of an increase of over 50 per cent in range, the percentage of hits was not only maintained, but showed a slight increase. We are glad to note that full charges are being used; for, when three-quarter charges were used, the velocity being less and the angle of fall greater, it followed that the danger space at the target and the chances of hitting the same were reduced. Consequently, although the gun pointing may have been as good, the number of hits made was smaller—a fact which tended to produce discouragement among the gun crews. This factor is of great importance, and in our opinion greatly outweighs any advantage of economy due to the smaller charges used.

GOOD AS WHEAT

OR

THE BOY WHO WAS ALL RIGHT

By **GASTON GARNE**

(A SERIAL STORY.)

CHAPTER XI (Continued).

"Bah! I saw old Mart Cruse die in that woman's house in Silverton—I was looking in at the window—and I saw you take the paper out of his coat. I have known old Mart Cruse a long time, and have more than once tried to get him to tell me where the gold mine was located—he always babbled about it in his cups—but I was never successful. So when I saw that he had told you what I had so long wished to know I made up my mind that I would git the knowledge from you, by securing the paper. Before I could fix up a scheme to get hold of the map, however, you got those fellows to agree to go with you in search of the mine, and the only thing left for me to do was to follow you. Now here we are, and I'm going to have the map, and you've got to tell me all you know about the mine."

"That was you who did that talking last night, wasn't it?" exclaimed Bob.

The ruffian grinned.

"I believe I did do a little speechifying last night," he said. "And your good friend, Boggett—you see, I know all about your crowd—how does he feel today, after his roll down the slope?"

"He will make it hot for you fellows if ever he gets the chance," said Bob.

The ruffians all laughed.

"But he won't get the chance," said one.

"No, and we'll serve him worse than that next time," from another.

The leader of the gang now stepped forward and began feeling in Bob's pockets.

He felt in every pocket, but did not find the paper he was looking for.

He was evidently disappointed.

"Where's the map?" he asked.

"I haven't it," replied Bob.

"I know better! You have it in a secret pocket, somewhere about your clothes."

"No."

"What did you do with it?"

"I burned it up."

"I don't believe you."

"I can't help that."

"Tell me where the map is!" hissed the ruffian.

"It is in the ashes. I burned it, for the very reason that I was afraid I might be captured, and I did not want that map to fall into anyone's hands."

"The ruffian gave utterance to an angry exclamation, and sticking the muzzle of his revolver against Bob's temple, hissed.

"Tell me where the map is, or I'll blow your brains out!"

CHAPTER XII.

REDSKINS ROUT THE ROAD AGENTS.

Bob was a brave boy. Then, too, he was a bright one, and did not believe that the ruffian would shoot him.

"He would not gain anything by doing that," he thought.

Nevertheless, it was the reverse of pleasant to have the cold muzzle of the revolver pressing against his temple.

"Say, take that gun away," he said.

"Tell me where the map is!"

"I have told you."

"You lied!"

"I did not."

"I am not trying to do so."

The ruffian was silent for a few moments, during which time he gazed steadily into the boy's eyes.

Bob returned the look unflinchingly, and presently the man lowered the revolver and replaced it in his belt.

"You burned the map, did you?" he remarked.

"Yes."

"All right; we'll let it go at that. But you will have to make us one from memory."

"There is no need of my doing that."

"Why not?"

"Because I can tell you all I know about it, and it will do as well as if I were to make a map."

"And you'll do it?"

"If you will agree to let me go free."

"I'll let you go free, after you tell me if you will agree to get your comrades to leave this part of the country at once."

Bob shook his head.

"I can't agree to that," he said.

"You'll have to—or die!"

"You wouldn't kill me in cold blood," Bob said, confidently.

"Sonny, don't you believe that! We are up here to find that gold mine and get the gold out of it, and we don't intend to let anything stand in our way. If you don't agree to leave these parts, we will kill you, and then we will kill the rest of your gang, and will have it all our own way."

"Then I refuse to tell you anything at all!" said Bob, determinedly.

"What!"

"You heard what I said."

"Not at all."

The leader of the road agent band was silent and thoughtful for a while, and then he said:

"Sonny, come over to our side. Join us, and we will find the mine, and will all share equally."

Bob's lips curled with scorn.

"What do you think I am?" he asked.

"Then you refuse?"

"I do! You don't suppose that I would go back on my friends in that manner, do you?"

"If you stick to them you will all lose your lives."

"I'll risk that."

Again the road agent pondered, and then he ordered one of the men to conduct the prisoner into the cavern.

This was done.

Bob was ordered to take a seat on a stone, which he did, and then the ruffians stepped out into the open air, and began talking earnestly.

From time to time they glanced in at him and Bob knew they must be talking of him.

And while they were talking he was thinking.

How he wished that he had not been captured!

He realized that he was in great danger.

The road agents were men who would not hesitate at any crime in order to carry their point.

Suddenly the thieves gave utterance to startled exclamations, and turned and fled at the top of their speed.

Bob was amazed.

"What does it mean?" he asked himself.

Then he heard a peculiar, swishing sound, and saw a number of barbed missiles go whistling past the entrance to the cavern.

"Indians!" was his thought.

Acting on the impulse of the moment, he leaped up and ran back into the depths of the cavern, and threw himself down in the darkest spot he could find.

As he did so, he caught a glimpse of a number of forms flashing past the entrance of the cavern.

Then wild whoops rent the air.

They were the thrilling war-whoops of the redskins of the region—the deadly Apaches.

Bob breathed easier when he saw the forms flash past and disappear from view.

"Perhaps they will pursue the road agents a long distance and then not come back here," was his thought. "In that case I can get away."

The trouble was that his arms were bound.

Still, it would not be impossible for him to make his way back to camp with his arms bound.

Then came the report of firearms. The road agents were firing at their pursuers, undoubtedly.

Bob wondered if it would not be a good idea for him to slip out of the cavern and away at once.

"Perhaps that will be the best thing to do," he thought. "If I can get out and away before the redskins come back this way then I may be able to get safely back to camp."

He started to rise, and then sank back again.

"No, I guess I had best not risk it," he murmured. "Some of the redskins might see me, and then it would all be up with me, for I could never hope to get away from them with my arms bound."

So he lay there, listening eagerly.

The firing ceased quickly, and no more shots were heard. Evidently the road agents had decided to run, and not bother about fighting.

"I hope the redskins will stick after them, and not come back at all," was Bob's thought.

He was of the opinion that the Indians did not know of his presence in the cavern.

If he was right about this then he was reasonably safe from discovery.

Half an hour passed, and Bob was again thinking of slipping out of the cavern and trying to get back to the camp.

Again he started to get up, but he paused when up to a sitting posture, and listened intently.

He heard voices, deep, guttural voices—the voices of Indians.

And then a score of hideous-looking redskins, their faces all bedaubed with vari-colored pigments, appeared in front of the cavern, and paused and peered in with keen, searching eyes.

Bob's heart almost stood still.

CHAPTER XIII.

A WILD CHASE.

Would the Indians come in and search the cavern?

If they did, they would surely find Bob and make him a prisoner.

It would be leaping from the frying-pan into the fire, so to speak, for him to become a prisoner to the redskins.

One of the Indians walked into the cavern a few paces, and looked all around, but even his keen eyes failed to penetrate into the depths of the cavern, where Bob was.

One of the Indians outside said something, and the redskins turned and walked out of the cavern.

Bob drew a long breath of relief.

He might escape discovery yet!

The Indians stood there, talking, for perhaps five minutes, and then they turned and walked away.

Bob remained motionless for at least fifteen minutes. He did not wish to take any chances of being discovered. If he hurried out he might be seen by the redskins, and then it would all be up with him.

(To be continued.)

FROM ALL POINTS

LEPER AT POKER GAME.

According to testimony offered in the Mayor's Court, at Wilkes-Barre, Pa., Joseph Norman, a leper, who is supposed to be under strict quarantine night and day, left his home at night and went to the home of a neighbor, where he engaged in a poker game.

A fight occurred, according to the testimony, while the game was on and efforts were made on the part of some of the poker players to steal a \$3 pot.

While the police were getting to the scene to make a raid, Norman left by the back way, climbed over several fences and entered the house which has been his prison for the last eighteen months. It is costing the city and the Central Poor Board \$3,000 annually for the care of Norman and his family and for guarding his home.

FRENCH PRISONERS PLACED IN FIRING ZONE.

The following official statement has been issued in Berlin:

"The recent treatment of German prisoners in the firing zone of the French district of operations was recently pointed out, and it was made known that the German Government had taken measures to remedy this intolerable state of affairs.

"To the French Government had been sent a note to the effect that all prisoners must be transported at least thirty kilometres behind the firing line; that they must be assembled in well equipped camps and put on a footing of equality with French prisoners of war in Germany in regard to their treatment, mail service and visits by representatives of neutral embassies.

"It was announced that in case of refusal several thousand French prisoners will be transported into the firing zone and submitted to the same conditions as the German prisoners of war behind the French front.

"As the French Government had not answered at the end of the time set, January 15, it is announced that the reprisals now will be carried out. These reprisals will continue until the German requests are complied with by the French Government."

FROM SOLITARY CONFINEMENT TO ORDINARY CELL.

Jesse Pomeroy, who has been for forty-one years in solitary confinement in the State prison at Charlestown, Mass., hereafter will have equal privileges with other prisoners by order of the executive council. Convicted of murder at 15, Pomeroy two years

later was locked in a cell lighted from a window in the ceiling so that he might not gaze on his fellow men. He took exercise apart from other prisoners and was barred as far as possible from human companionship. Such a record of punishment is rare in the prison annals of this country.

Now, at the age of 57 years, Pomeroy will move into a cell where he can see passersby, will be permitted to exercise with other prisoners, sit with them at the church services and at the prison entertainments, and will have such light work in the prison shops as his somewhat enfeebled health will permit. Governor McCall announced that he approved the commutation.

Pomeroy was convicted of the murder of two children, following a series of degenerate acts which had terrorized the South Boston and Dorchester districts of Boston. He was sentenced to be hanged, but because of his youth the sentence was commuted to solitary imprisonment for life. On September 7, 1876, he was placed in his solitary cell at the Charles Street Jail.

TRAPPER UNEARTHS GEMS.

Three cans containing jewelry worth, according to estimates, \$35,000 were uncovered in a niche in a rocky cliff on the George Anderson ranch, east of Wheatland, Yuba county, Cal., by Alfred Talbot, Talbot, setting his trap in what he thought to be a trapper.

Talbot, setting his trap in what he thought to be a "coon hole," placed his hands on the cans. He opened them and found them filled with jewelry, diamonds, rings, watches and stickpins.

So far Sheriff McCoy has been unable to find any clue to the owner of the cached jewelry. It is believed to have been cached there at least twenty years ago.

The cans were red with rust and almost falling to pieces. The paper wrapped about the jewelry was yellow with age. The watches are of a pattern in vogue a quarter of a century ago.

Several valuable rings, one with a solitaire diamond setting valued at more than \$300, bracelets studded with diamonds, ruby and pearl stickpins, were in the cans.

Sheriff McCoy believes the valuables unearthed by Talbot were stolen years ago from a jewelry store.

That somebody recently has been trying to uncover the cache is the opinion of Talbot, who said there were many evidences that his trained woodsman's eye could detect of the earth having been disturbed as though somebody had been digging and wished to conceal his work.

ON TOP

OR

THE BOY WHO GOT THERE

By ED KING

(A SERIAL STORY.)

CHAPTER XIX.

THE NEW CLAIMANT.

No legal papers were yet drawn up in the forming of the New West Mining Company. Each felt confidence in the honor of the other members.

But Colonel Pulsifer wrote out a brief form of contract, which all signed. This was sufficient for the present.

Colonel Pulsifer was unanimously elected president, Julius Clark was secretary, and Tiff was treasurer. Jack Hope accepted the office of general manager and Tug was elected director. The capitalization was nominally a million dollars, with one hundred and ten thousand dollars cash capital paid in.

"Of course, as soon as we begin to do business we must conform to the laws of the State and incorporate," said Colonel Pulsifer. "But at present this is sufficient. Now our first move will be to engage engineers and surveyors."

"There are already surveyors working on the ledges," said Tug.

All looked up in surprise.

"Is that so?" demanded Colonel Pulsifer. "By whose right?"

"I dunno," said Tug. "I saw old Caleb Lowe out there yesterday."

Tiff's eyes flashed.

"He is trespassing," he said. "He has no right on my land, and I shall order him off."

"To-morrow we will pay a visit to the claim," said the colonel, "and if he is there it will be a good time to mention the fact to him."

"I shall certainly do so," declared Tiff. "I owe him no courtesy whatever. I shall maintain my rights."

"That's the way to talk," declared Jack Hope. "It's a bluff game. They probably want to make sure there's a gold vein on your land."

"There is certainly some powerful reason," said Colonel Pulsifer. "We must proceed with due care and caution, for my experience with these sharpers has been a costly one."

"I don't see how they can make trouble for me," said Tiff. "I own the land. The title is clear. I can defend my rights."

"Waal," said Jack Hope, with a shrug of his shoul-

ders, "there's a good many queer loops in ther laws of Montana regarding the rights of miners an' prospectors. If I was you I'd keep 'em off my land."

Tiff slept lightly that night. His mind was filled with all sorts of odd fears and fancies. He knew that he had a hard gang to fight. But he was determined to hold his ground.

The next day Tiff met Coonel Pulsifer and his father, Julius Clark, and preparations were made for a visit to the New West claim. Tug did not accompany them.

Mr. Clark was in a happy frame of mind. The pallor of his cheeks was giving way to a good clear color, and the light of anxiety in his eyes was lessening.

"It was a kind Providence that brought you to Wild Creek, Tiff," he said. "I was just about to give up my grip. I was thoroughly discouraged. It seemed to me as if there was no chance in the world for me."

Once again the hunted light came into Julius Clark's eyes, and he looked sharply behind him.

"It is an awful feeling that you may be bagged by officers of the law, Tiff. There is never a sense of security. At any moment your end may come. I used to suspect every stranger, and be constantly on the qui vive. As it is, I know that if I become a conspicuous figure in Wild Creek I shall sooner or later be hunted down."

"Well," said Tiff, "if the worst comes we will make them prove their forgery charge. Perhaps we can fight it out and beat them."

"As sure as I am taken back to Belmont to answer that charge, so sure shall I be made to go to prison for ten years. You cannot wonder that I am haunted by a dreadful fear which sees danger in every shadow and hears voices in every breeze. No, I must go back into seclusion very soon. There is no other way, Tiff."

"But there must be some way to prove your innocence," said Tiff. "I shall leave no stone unturned to bring it about."

"There is only one man in the world who can clear me of the charge."

"Who?"

"John Melton!"

Tiff's face fell.

"From what I know of John Melton," he said, "you might as well appeal to an image of stone. He is a villain."

"That is true, Tiff. My only hope of escaping prison is to continue my fugitive existence. And I can tell you it is not pleasant."

Tiff felt a sinking of the heart. The outlook was not encouraging. But he said:

"At present you are safe, father. I don't think a detective would dare to arrest you in Wild Creek. Our influence here will soon be too great."

"As long as I am safe I shall remain here," said Mr. Clark. "I have suffered much, Tiff. Your presence here is the only bit of happiness I have had since I left home."

"I will make an appeal to Melton——"

"It will be useless."

"At least I can try. If John Melton has a spark of human mercy and kindness in his nature he will speak the word that will clear you."

They had now crossed the bridge over Wild Creek and turned into a rocky path which led to Tiff's claim.

The tall elevator over the Old Sledge shaft could be seen. Workmen were busy about it. Suddenly Colonel Pulsifer exclaimed:

"It is true, Tiff. They are making a survey of your land."

Tiff's cheeks flushed. He saw the theodolite and flags of the surveys on a distant ledge of rock. He saw the figures of several men. One of them he recognized as Caleb Lowe.

For some moments Tiff stood watching them. He saw that there could be no mistake. They had set up stakes on his land. Tiff approached them very quietly.

"What is going on here?" he asked, bluntly.

The surveyors did not reply. Caleb Lowe looked up and said curtly:

"Can't you see?"

"It looks as if you were trespassing on my land," said Tiff.

"Is that so?" said Lowe. "Didn't you agree to sell it to us?"

"No, sir; I did not," said Tiff, quietly. "Unless you can give a better reason I must request you to leave at once."

"Well, that is rather a rude way to treat your neighbor," said Lowe, with a sneer.

"It matters not," said Tiff, resolutely. "You have no right to survey here or to intrude. I order you to leave my land!"

"We shall leave when we have finished our survey," declared Lowe. "For that matter, I doubt your rights. We have examined the title and find that your ownership is hardly secure or legal. We want this claim, and if you will not sell it we must take it, by right of a better claim."

Tiff's veins tingled. He could hardly credit the effrontery of the villain.

"The land is mine by legacy," he said. "I can

prove my ownership and my title. I would like to know what better claim you can furnish."

"The claim of a legal heir," said Lowe.

"An heir! Moses Fiske had no known kith or kin."

"Didn't he?" sneered Lowe. "Well, that is just where you get left. There is a young man in this party at present who has a better claim to this land than you. He is the nephew of Moses Fiske."

Lowe beckoned to a sharp-featured youth who was with the surveyors. He approached and glanced superciliously at Tiff.

"Mr. Harold Fiske, allow me to introduce you to this fellow, Tiffany Clark, who claims that he owns this land by right of your uncle's will."

"Indeed?" said the sharp-featured youth, giving Tiff a cold and contemptuous look. "It is a very unlikely thing that my uncle would do such a thing as that. Even if he did, he was of unsound mind when he died. You will find your claim is absolutely valueless, sir."

Tiff was never so deeply stirred in his life. He was not for a moment deceived that this new claimant was really a relative of Moses Fiske.

"My claim is legal and complete," replied Tiff, "and no bluff game or underhand scheme can deceive me. I warn you off my land, or I will employ proper means to put you off!"

"Oh, you will?" said Harold Fiske, jeeringly. "We shall like to see you do it."

"I realize that Wild Creek is a locality somewhat beyond the reach of the law," said Tiff. "But if I can do no better, I will employ the means recognized as lawful in a community like this."

"And what is that?"

"Physical force!"

Young Fiske placed his hands on his hips and guffawed.

"Do you hear that, Mr. Lowe? He is going to put us off with physical force. He must be a Samson. Why don't you begin right now, my spring chicken? I'll give you a chance."

And with cool and insulting manner the fellow brought his right hand sharply in contact with Tiff's cheek.

What happened next Tiff never exactly remembered; nor, for that matter, did the very fresh young man who had dared to slap his face.

For in the fraction of a second, Mr. Harold Fiske was seeing stars and rolling on the ground some yards away. The lightning delivery of Tiff's fist had raised his right eye to the swollen proportions of a good-sized hen's egg.

So stunned was young Fiske that he did not at once arise. But now, what had been a passage-at-arms with nature's weapons came near culminating in a tragedy.

For Caleb Lowe, with face swollen with fierce passion, had pulled his revolver and opened fire at close range upon Tiff. One bullet grazed his ear and another passed through his coat-sleeve.

(To be continued.)

TIMELY TOPICS

GETS A WHITE WEASEL.

A white weasel was trapped recently by Lamont Borton, a young farmer living east of Fayette, O. Old residents say that they were once common in this territory, but this is the first one that has been seen in recent years.

KITE BALLOONS FOR OUR NAVY.

The U. S. S. "Nevada" and "Oklahoma" are being equipped by the Navy Department for testing kite balloons for spotting purposes this year at Guantanamo, according to a statement made by Captain Josiah S. McKean, U. S. A., before the House Naval Affairs Committee. They will cost from \$4,000 to \$6,000 each, and will carry two men each and will be about 75 to 80 feet in length and 30 feet in diameter.

EAGLE IN BALBOA PARK.

A huge bald-headed American eagle shot and disabled by David Goldbaum of Ensenada, while it was in the act of carrying off a live sheep, arrived at San Diego on the British motor vessel Gryme. Goldbaum presented the eagle to the city of San Diego to be placed in the aviary at Balboa Park. Goldbaum's bullet bore through one of the eagle's wings, crippling it. The bird put up a terrific fight before it could be subdued and placed in a cage.

STOLEN GEMS RETURNED.

Diamond rings and brooches worth \$5,000 which mysteriously disappeared from the home of Patrick W. Finn, a contractor, at Anthills, a suburb of Altoona, Pa., have been just as mysteriously recovered.

When the family returned from church Christmas morning the stolen gems, wrapped neatly in a little paper bag and bound with red ribbon, were found hanging to the door knob. While there were servants in the house, no one had seen a stranger about the premises and the identity of the thief is still unknown.

Four men had been arrested on suspicion.

SUES STATE FOR HORSE.

Ralph Humphrey, who lives at Mohegan, N. Y., and owns a farm at Merwinsville, has asked the State of Connecticut to recompense him for a horse which came out second best in a squabble with a buck deer and had to be shot.

Assemblyman Averill, of Litchfield County, has introduced a bill in the Legislature asking that Humphrey be paid \$150 for his loss. The horse was drawing a wagon along the road near Merwinsville at night when the buck, frightened by an automobile, came charging down the road and plunged

its antlers into the horse's side. State laws permit the deer to roam at large and forbid any one to molest them.

CONVICTS RETURN TO PRISON.

Captain J. T. Hazzard, who has been in charge of the construction work being done on the north and south highway by convicts in the vicinity of Whitebird, Idaho, passed through Lewiston the other day with the convicts enroute to Boise, the weather being such as to put a stop to the work.

The convict camp was established about eight months ago, and during that period approximately \$18,000 worth of work has been done on the highway. Captain Hazzard estimates the work done by this convict labor to be a saving of 30 per cent. over contract work.

Sheriff Yates of Idaho County passed through Lewiston bound to Boise in charge of Amos Holcomb, a parole convict, who will be returned to the penitentiary, having been caught snatching a purse from a woman of Grangeville.

THE MUNITIONS INDUSTRY.

The high water mark has been passed in making British guns, shells and all kinds of ammunition for the Allied armies. England now faces the large problem of diverting this production into new and useful channels, by which the nation will again supply the outside world with goods, thus diminishing the steady outflow of gold and checking the decline in the British exchange rate.

There are now 4,623 private factories and works, ordinarily employed in various useful kinds of metal production, which have been taken over by the Government and are now controlled works. These are in addition to the regular Government factories.

There are 2,250,000 employes working in these "controlled" and Government factories making exclusive guns and shells.

This enormous production has now reached a point where the equipment of the army is approximately complete in some of the main lines.

The extent to which this gun and shell output has grown is shown by figures given at the Ministry of Munitions. The comparison is made between June, 1915, when the war had just got under way, and today. For every heavy howitzer produced then there are 323 produced now; for every field howitzer produced then there are 46 produced now; for every medium gun then there are 66 now. The output of 60-pounders and 6-inch guns went up eighteen fold and has now dropped back to twelve fold, as the supply is too great. As a whole the production of guns of all calibres has increased forty-one fold on those of medium weight and twelve fold on the heavier guns.

Fame and Fortune Weekly

NEW YORK, MARCH 2, 1917.

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Good Current News Articles

A large deer appeared in a pasture near Estey, W. Va., in which there were a large number of cows, owned by W. L. Huffman, and defeated the cattle in a pitched battle, goring several of them to such an extent that they later died. The deer was captured and killed by a posse.

One afternoon recently, as a passenger train on the Carey-Findlay branch of the Big Four neared Huber, the brakeman called the town. Then the train stopped suddenly. A couple of passengers alighted and looked for the town. They couldn't see it. They then discovered that the engineer had stopped to remove a stubborn dog from the track.

Philip Gardinier, of Nelsonville, N. Y., breathed easier upon recovering his hat in which he had sewed \$842 in bills. A gust of wind blew it off his head while he was riding on a train. Gardinier broke his right arm in his haste to get the improvised bank by jumping off, but, despite his injuries, he searched for the hat and found it in some weeds.

The Department of Commerce announced on January 20 that its record showed a total gross tonnage of 1,495,601 in steel merchant vessels under construction or contracted for by American shipbuilders on January 1. Four hundred and three vessels were included in this record-breaking total, many being for foreign account, however. The Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce announced that approximately one billion dollars' worth of war munitions had been exported to Europe. This includes cartridges valued at \$85,000,000; gunpowder, \$250,000,000; firearms, \$60,000,000 and other explosives, \$475,000,000.

If merchant ships were to make use of the smoke screen, they would find it to be a very effective defense against submarine attacks. If a merchant ship on sighting a submarine turns at once to windward

and chokes off the draft of her fires, she can throw behind her a heavy cloud of smoke which would be very baffling to the enemy. If the ship were an oil burner the screen would be particularly effective, for oil smoke is dense, slow to dissipate, and settles low upon the water. The submarine would hesitate to use her superior speed to close in on a ship which she could not see, particularly if she knew that the merchantman, as soon as the submarine became visible through the smoke, would be prepared to open on her with a 6-inch gun. Merchantmen should be armed with nothing less than a 4.7 or 6-inch piece, since these in the hands of a gunner at all expert would be sure death to a submarine steaming at the surface. The armament should consist of four of these guns, one forward, one aft and one on each beam. The difficulty, of course, would be to provide quickly sufficient of these guns to arm the 4,000 ships of 2,000 tons and upward, in the British Merchant Marine.

Grins and Chuckles

Friend—What makes you think Tom has broken his promise to keep straight. **Fiancee**—Well, he brings me more expensive presents than he used to.

Mr. Oldboy—The mountain air is very exhilarating. I feel like a two-year-old this morning. **Miss Younger**—And you look it, too, fifty times over.

He—You might at least have given me some warning that you were going to throw me over. **She**—Well, haven't I been nice to you for over a week?

Fond Father—Heaven bless you, sir, for rescuing my daughter from a watery grave. Think of the risk you ran. **Life-Saver**—No risk at all, sir, I'm married.

A man who wished to take proceedings against a creditor in a distant town sent a letter addressed: "To any respectable lawyer in A—" The post-office returned the letter marked "Not known."

Jaggles—What do you think of the stand taken by people who won't work for a living? **Waggles**—It is altogether too uncertain. Some fellows become millionaires at it, while others starve to death.

"It was only five years ago I started in with our firm at five dollars a week," said Bragg, "and now I earn fifty a week without any trouble." "That's so; it's easy to earn that," replied Newitt, "but how much do you get?"

"Like the rest of my sex," said the mermaid, "I suppose I open my mouth a good deal, but—" "But what?" interrupted the lobster. "I never put my foot in it," continued the belle of the sea, as she plunged into the surf.

AN ADVENTURE WITH WOLVES.

By Kit Clyde.

We lighted a fire to cook our supper, which consisted of turtles that Pepe had brought from the neighboring marsh, and were laid on the embers, shell side down, after which the scales could be very easily taken off.

We made a miserable meal. The flesh of the turtles was execrable; it had a strong taste of mud.

Supper over, we proceeded to make our preparation for the night.

In the vicinity of the marshes, and notwithstanding that the warm season had come, the nights were cool; it was therefore decided that the fire should be kept up until the next morning—a matter easy enough, since the *jarillas*, among which we were camping, are shrubs of so resinous a nature that they feel sticky to the touch, and that even the green wood burns with a brilliant flame.

For another reason also, we deemed it obligatory to keep the fire up all night—it was necessary for our personal safety, inasmuch as we were liable to be attacked by beasts of prey, which are very common in this part of South America.

It was agreed, as usual, that Charles should keep watch for the first two hours, and then Luiz.

Our horses were tethered to the stunted trunk of a willow standing some twenty yards away; then we wrapped ourselves in our *ponchos*, and with our feet turned toward the fire, we slept a sleep well earned by ten hours of slow but continuous travel.

But the sleepers were not more tired than the watchers. Charles, feeling himself compelled to yield to sleep, could not awake Luiz, who naturally continued to snore while the fire died down for want of fuel.

We had been sleeping quietly, when, about 11 o'clock, we were suddenly awakened by a prolonged and plaintive cry. We sprang to our feet and instinctively rushed to our guns—all except Miguel, who was stirring up the ashes in the hope of finding one live ember.

Then several other cries just like the first were heard, but nearer.

They sounded like the howling of wolves.

"We are lost," tranquilly observed our guide; "those are the red wolves."

In the mouth of Barlejo, those three words, We are lost, had a terrible significance; they were equivalent to a sentence of death. Whether it was natural coolness, or the habitual indifference gained by an adventurous life, I do not know, but we made our preparations of defense with all the calm of men who are not overfrightened by the prospect of death.

The howlings continued—they steadily increased in volume as they drew nearer—in a little while they suddenly redoubled at a short distance from the camp.

We felt especially anxious about our horses. Armed with our hunting-guns, which we had charged with buckshot, we were on the point of approaching the poor animals, which we could see trembling all over by the moonlight, when the *vaqueano* requested us to do nothing of the kind.

"Don't bother yourselves about them!" he exclaimed. "Stand all right there in front of Miguel, who is trying to start the fire—that is our only chance of safety. Silence, now!—and be careful not to shoot until I tell you!"

At that moment a dozen wolves sprang out of the cover before us, their eyes glowing in the night like burning charcoal.

"Eh! what hawseholes!" cried the incorrigible sailor, Loanneec. "Look, Miguel! there is something to light your fire with!"

I struck the sailor on the back of the neck, as a means of reminding him of the order given; he held his peace.

Meanwhile, after a moment's hesitation, the wolves approached our horses, which began to perform a singular maneuver. Pressing closely against one another, with their heads all turned to a common center (the willow tree to which they had been tied), they formed a ring; motionless, presenting their croups to the enemy, they awaited the attack.

The wolves began to turn around the living circle—first at a cautious distance, then nearer and nearer—and all at once they leaped at our steeds.

But they had reckoned without their hosts.

At the same moment that the wolves leaped, our horses—all together, as if moved by one spring—suddenly gave a terrific kick; the assailants were flung ten yards away, and rolled on the ground, uttering another kind of howl—strange and funeral.

It seemed as if they were calling for help.

"What a magnificent kick!" cried Loanneec, with admiration.

"That howl is a call," said Barlejo, thus explaining to us the difference we had already noticed in the way our enemies howled. "In a little while we'll have the whole pack on us."

Barlejo was not mistaken.

Other howls responded to the howls of the wounded wolves, and almost immediately we saw about fifty rushing in our direction.

"Fire!" commanded the *vaqueano*.

The new arrivals were received with a volley, immediately followed by another. Startled by our firearms, the survivors scattered in all directions with horrible yelpings. It was the signal for the general invasion. All the underbrush, which seemed so lifeless a little while before, now appeared one enormous lair of wild beasts. Right and left, and in front, new packs came rushing into the open space of which we unfortunately occupied the center, so that our enemies were able to surround us.

Volley followed volley, but wolves ever succeeded to wolves. Every discharge carried death into the

mass of wild beasts, but every cry of death brought a new pack to the scene. The ground was covered with their carcasses—some had been riddled by our buckshot, others killed by our horses. Men and beasts defended themselves; yet the more numerous the victims, the more numerous seemed to become the assailants.

We expected to have them upon us at every second; evidently we should never be able to overcome the hungry pack who only retreated from the very flash of our volley. A few minutes more, and we should all be devoured.

Meanwhile we kept on firing—with buckshot, small shot and ball. We hardly knew what we were doing; our brains seemed to boil. We were at the very white-heat of excitement. As for myself, I thought I should go mad!

Luckily Miguel had succeeded in rekindling the fire.

"Get behind now!" cried Barlejo; "but take care not to turn your backs, and keep on firing."

Obedient to the orders of the *vaqueano*, we retreated slowly, firing buckshot all the while.

"Stop firing!"

At the same time Miguel and Barlejo threw in front of us two blazing fagots, from the vicinity of which the wolves at once beat a hasty retreat.

In a few minutes we were surrounded by about ten bonfires. While the two gauchos kept lighting their fagots at the principal fire, we continued to shoot, so as to protect them.

Then the fury of the wolves seemed to be turned against our horses.

"Do as I do!" cried the *vaqueano*, lighting another fagot.

We all followed his example, and in a minute or two each one of us had a gigantic torch, and we began to place these in a line, a little distance apart from one another, in the direction of the horses. We went back, lit more fagots, placed them a little further, and so continued the line of fires until they formed a circle large enough to surround ourselves, our horses and a small thicket of *jarillas*.

One thing which impressed us all a great deal, was the way that the wolves would retreat to quite a distance whenever we approached with the improvised torches in our hands. The sight of the fire evidently terrified them much more than the discharge of our guns. Fire was, indeed, less murderous than our weapons—in fact it was absolutely harmless to the wolves; but it constituted a far better safeguard for us. Consequently we began to feel a little hope again, and to consider our situation less desperate, although it was still anything but assuring. The whole question of life and death for us could be summed up in the single word, fire, and, thanks to the plan of Barlejo, we could supply ourselves with fuel enough to keep our fires going until morning.

Then the scene in which we were performing so important a role became really fantastic.

Terrified by the flames whose weird glare lent

a lurid color to all the surrounding shrubbery, the wolves had retreated to a little distance. Like monsters vomited from the nether world, they turned swiftly round and round our fire which they dared not cross, and which made a sort of rampart for us. Their thousand eyes, which shone like thousands of burning coals, shot out phosphorescent gleams; their howlings, their wild leaps, their enormously enlarged shadows, gave strange and terrible effect to the scene. It suggested fancies of anthropophagi dancing the death-dance around their victims.

Suddenly a change, which we could not explain, but which we noticed at once, took place in their movements. Their leaps became systematically regular; their ranks formed in order; their howlings became a chorus, almost a harmony—to disorder succeeded order, symphony to cacophony. The circle which they now made around us was mathematically regular; they wheeled in a gallop, measured and automatic, like that of circus-horses.

Little by little their course quickened; they began to gallop with dizzy rapidity, but always at one pace, like cavalry upon a day of review.

Thoughtful of the danger that menaced us, we kept watching them; we almost admired them. But the thousands of luminous points whirling around us—appearing and disappearing with the rapidity of lightning, dazzled and fascinated us, like the glittering tinsel trappings of those wooden horses circling under a thousand lights at one of our great fairs. The howlings, now monotonous and cadenced, made us drowsy, made us dreamy.

And in a little time it seemed to us that we were being drawn into a great inverse movement; we felt ourselves carried along in an infernal dance, in a devilish whirl—ourselves, our horses, and even our fires. The wolves no longer appeared to move; it was we who were circling round and round under the gaze of those thousand flaming eyes, motionless, glaring with frightened fixity. The wild beasts were the spectators—they were the orchestra—we were only the actors.

"Shut your eyes, everybody!" cried Barlejo.

We all started at the gaucho's voice—we obeyed him; it was high time, we were on the point of failing.

The fascination had passed; the charm was broken.

The wolves still whirled around us—still kept their eyes fixed upon us! it was evidently a maneuver to make us dizzy. Imitating our guide we flung some burning brands into the middle of the pack.

Terrified, and howling louder than before under the bits of fire, the beasts of prey disbanded—their howlings were no longer the same, they were cries of fury and pain—they felt the game was lost—they knew their prey would escape them.

Thanks to Barlejo, we had triumphed over one of the greatest dangers which threaten all travelers bold enough to venture into the chanars of the South; the *vaqueano* had saved our lives.

FACTS WORTH READING

RATTLESNAKE OIL \$14.40 A POUND.

The market value of prime rattlesnake oil is \$14.40 a pound. That price was paid to John Blakemore of Colorado City, Tex., world's rattlesnake king, for eight pounds of oil. This quantity was extracted from forty-eight diamond backs, the most poisonous of the species. San Angelo boasts one of the few rattlesnake oil markets in the world.

CLOCK TAKES VACATION.

Morgan Johnson, a newspaper distributor of Middleport, O., bought a clock in 1881. It ran along very cheerfully until about nine years ago, when it stopped stock still. No amount of persuasion would start it again. The other day his sister Retta was dusting when she happened to touch it, whereupon it started off as vigorously as at first, and it has been keeping good time and striking the hours ever since.

MUST MUZZLE GEESE.

Alderman William McCartney of Wilkes-Barre, Pa., has ordered William H. Bonn to muzzle a flock of 200 geese in order that residents of the Heights portion of this city be not annoyed by squawking and cackling.

The decision was made after Bonn had been arrested by Osborne Morgan on a charge of maintaining a nuisance. Morgan alleged that he was kept awake nights by the noise of the geese.

Alderman McCartney agreed that geese have no sense and they are just as likely to squawk and "murder sleep" at night as not. He decided that Bonn must muzzle the geese or dispose of them.

JITNEY RIDES FOR HOBOES.

Brownsville, Tex., is probably the only city in the United States operating a "hobo jitney." Tramps and vagrants no longer "hit the grit" or "ride the rods" when leaving this town. Instead they occupy a cushion seat in a flivver.

There is an ordinance against "hopping trains," but the city authorities have observed that where vags are ordered out of town they walk only a short distance and then come back. So to avoid tempting the tramps to violate the city ordinance by catching "rattlers" and to make certain they would be removed so far from the city that it would be easier to walk to some other joint than Brownsville, the "hobo jitney" was inaugurated.

WHISKEY FROM BATHROOM.

When Federal officers went to search for a still thought to be operated by John Knox, according to their testimony in the case tried recently at Atlanta, Ga., they were informed that they could not

search one room because two small daughters of Knox were taking a bath.

They took up their stand outside of the house. Becoming impatient over the manner in which the small girls prolonged their bath, one of the officers went around the side of the house. There he found, according to his testimony, a stream of liquor issuing from the room in which the girls were supposed to be bathing.

They ordered a search of the room. The officers stated that the girls were discovered busily engaged in pouring out several gallons of whiskey through cracks in the floor. A search in the attic of the house revealed the hiding place of a new worm and still.

FROZEN ON HUNTING TRIP.

The bodies of Otto Powell and his bride have been found in the mountains after a search covering several weeks. On December 17 they left on a hunting trip. They froze to death.

The bodies were found on the Little Nisqually River, not far from Mona, Wash., by W. D. Stone of Puyallup, and P. Parmenter, who went into the woods in search of the Powells.

Success in finding the Powells is due largely to a collie dog owned by Stone. The bodies were found within a short distance of the place where the searching parties had given up the hunt and not far from the noonday camp that was established by the Powells, on a high cliff at the junction of the Little Nisqually River and Mona Creek.

They were not more than five miles from camp and almost within hearing distance of the logging camps at Alder.

LETTING ELECTRICITY DO THE SCRUBBING.

The latest recruit to the ranks of electric labor-saving devices is a scrubbing machine. It weighs about 100 pounds and is entirely self-contained with the single exception that it takes its current from any convenient socket. The machine wets, sweeps, scrubs and dries the floor at a single operation. It requires only a single attendant, who merely pushes the machine forward and guides it. He controls the amount of water distributed on the floor by means of the handle. This water is immediately swept up by a cylindrical brush which is 16 inches wide and has a circumference of 20 inches. This brush is driven by a one-fourth horse-power motor at a speed of 600 revolutions per minute. The brush does the actual scrubbing and carries all of the dirt and soiled water over an apron into a separate receiving pan, so the scrubbing is always done with clean water from the upper tank. The machine is said to have a capacity of nearly 7,000 square feet of surface per hour.

INTERESTING ARTICLES

MONTANA'S BOBCAT INDUSTRY.

The killing of bobcats for their pelts is becoming something of an industry in the Bull Mountains, where the cats are said to be unusually numerous this year. The pelts are worth from \$2.50 to \$4 each, and shipments are regularly made to Eastern fur houses.

GOLD IN THE STREETS.

Gold specimens worth \$2 and \$3 each were picked up on a newly macadamized street in Grass Valley, Cal., after a heavy rain. Dozens of miners spent many hours in the search and nearly all were rewarded with finds of some value. The rock with which the streets are macadamized came from mine dumps and contains gold-bearing quartz.

DOG SAVES A WOMAN'S LIFE.

After lying paralyzed on the floor of her home in the cold for twenty-four hours, Miss Marie Sherwood, 55 years old, of Patterson, N. Y., was saved by the continual barking of a dog from being frozen to death. Her feet, it is feared, are both frozen.

Miss Sherwood suffered a stroke Friday morning shortly after getting her breakfast. She could not move or shout for help. The fire went out in the stove after several hours passed, and the woman was slowly freezing when James Glenn, going through the dooryard, heard the dog, hungry and thirsty, barking and whining. The dog yelped so Glenn looked in the windows and saw Miss Sherwood lying as if dead on the floor. He summoned Dr. Burt, who found the woman paralyzed and left a nurse to care for her.

LACE GROWS ON TREES.

Lace grows on trees on the Isthmus of Panama, and the trees grow wild in the swamps, Captain L. W. Richards of the steamship Norwalk brought a fine sample, not merely as a curiosity, but to induce tests as to the probable utility of the plant or tree in this section.

When the bark of the limbs is stripped there are rolls of a filmy substance, of a texture very much like mosquito netting. The size of these layers increases with the size of the tree, the largest being about a foot in diameter. This fabric is strong and can be sewn without tearing. The natives use the stuff in making garments.

Captain Richards believes that by cultivation the tree may become very valuable, and if the lace layers cannot be enlarged some process may be perfected by which they can be joined into a fabric which will make the finest mosquito bar and may even serve for summer rainment.

WED SEVENTY YEARS WITHOUT STRIFE.

J. P. Bentley, ninety years old, and his wife, Mrs. Susan Fristoe Bentley, eighty-eight years of age, were married seventy years ago and never had a fuss. They recently celebrated their anniversary. They live near Forest Green, Mo.

Mr. Bentley, who has lived all his life on his farm and still runs the 600-acre tract himself, is rated one of the wealthiest men in Charlton County, having amassed a fortune of between \$75,000 and \$100,000.

Both he and his wife were born on adjoining farms. When they were wed they agreed that if either became angry the other should take cognizance of it, and preserve an unruffled demeanor. This, they say, is the secret of their smooth relations.

Nine children, five of whom are living, were born to the union.

The Bentley farm descended to its present owner from his father, who obtained it from the Government by grant in 1815.

SNUFF BAFFLES HOUNDS.

The habit of snuff taking undoubtedly helped Private Peter Nelson of Vancouver to elude Teuton bloodhounds, for when he skipped his camp in Germany and heard the baying of the hounds he threw pinches of snuff about. This and the shelter of a friendly wood enabled him to cover up his traces. Nelson had been sent to camp not far from Muenster, where drainage operations were the staple work.

He managed to elude the guards and got into a wood near by where he could hear the dogs barking and machine guns working. He threw snuff over his footsteps and made so rapid a journey that next morning at 6:30 he found himself over the frontier, the distance covered being almost thirty miles. At one point he almost ran into a sentry, but managed to avoid him without attracting undue notice.

Having, as he believed, got into Holland, he inquired of a boy and found his surmise was correct. That supposition was at first suggested by the fact that two or three workmen were cycling to work and that they were young men. In Germany there would be no young men not in uniform. Two mounted police came along and asked Nelson if he was an escaped prisoner, and within an hour he was before an inspector. This time, however, the role of the police was to liberate rather than jail their man, and further, they gave him the best meal he had had for over a year, together with money and a letter to take him to the consul at Rotterdam. At the pay office at Westminster he had the satisfaction of drawing his pay for the entire period of his internment.

THE BALANCING BIRD.


It measures more than four inches from tip to tip of wings, and will balance perfectly on the tip of your finger nail, on the point of a lead pencil, or on any pointed instrument, only the tip of the bill resting on the nail or pencil point, the whole body of the bird being suspended in the air with nothing to rest on. It will not fall off unless shaken off. A great novelty. Wonderful, amusing and instructive.

Price 10 cents, mailed postpaid.
WOLFF Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

SEHRIFF BADGE.

With this badge attached to your coat or vest you can show the boys that you are a sheriff, and if they don't behave themselves you might lock them up. It is a beautiful nickel-plated badge, $2\frac{1}{4}$ by $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in size, with the words "Sheriff 23. By Heck"

in nickel letters on the face of it, with a pin on the back for attaching it to your clothing. Send for one and have some fun with the boys.

Price 15 cents, or 3 for 40 cents; sent by mail, postpaid.

H. F. LANG, 1815 Centre St., B'klyn, N. Y.

SCIENTIFIC MIND READING

Wonderful! Startling! Scientific! You hand a friend a handsome set of cards on which are printed the names of the 28 United States Presidents. Ask him to secretly select a name and hold the card to his forehead and think of the name. Like a flash comes the answer "Lincoln Washington," or whatever name he is thinking of. The more you repeat it the more puzzling it becomes. With our outfit you can do it anywhere, any time, with anybody. Startle your friends. Do it at the next party or at your club and be the lion of the evening. This was invented by a famous magician.

Price, with complete set of cards and full instructions, 12 cents, mailed, postpaid.

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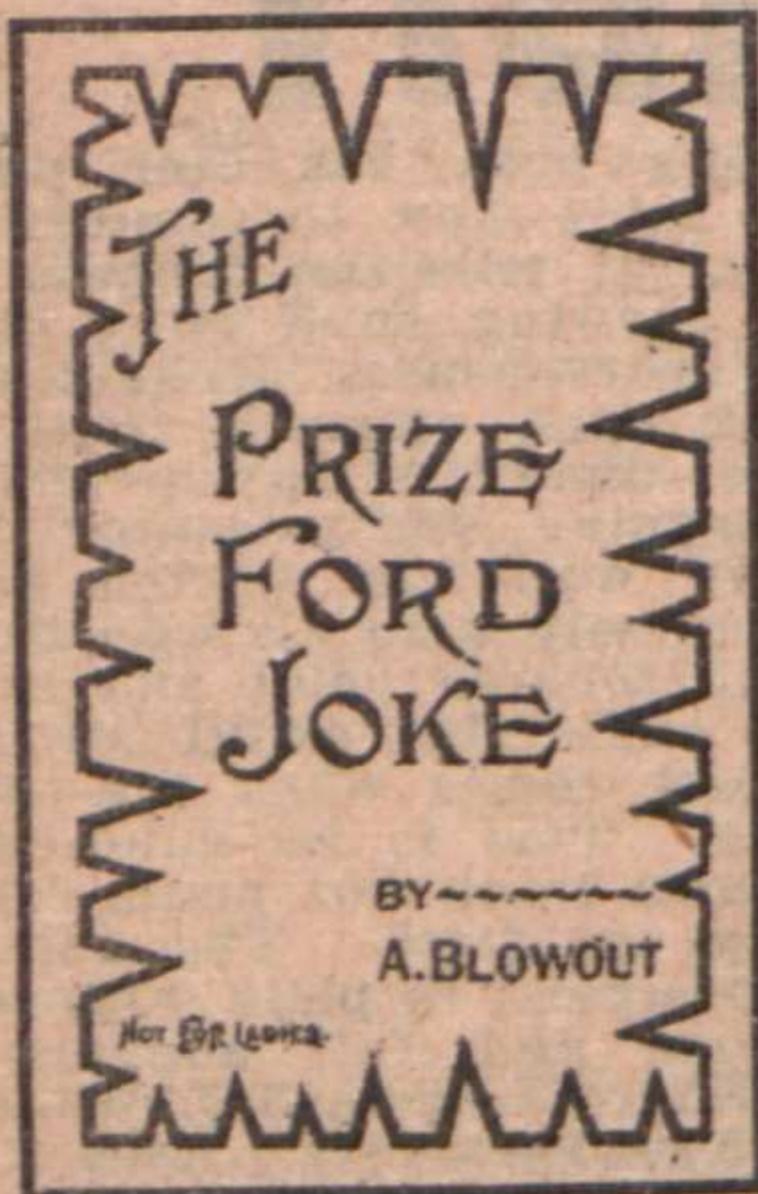
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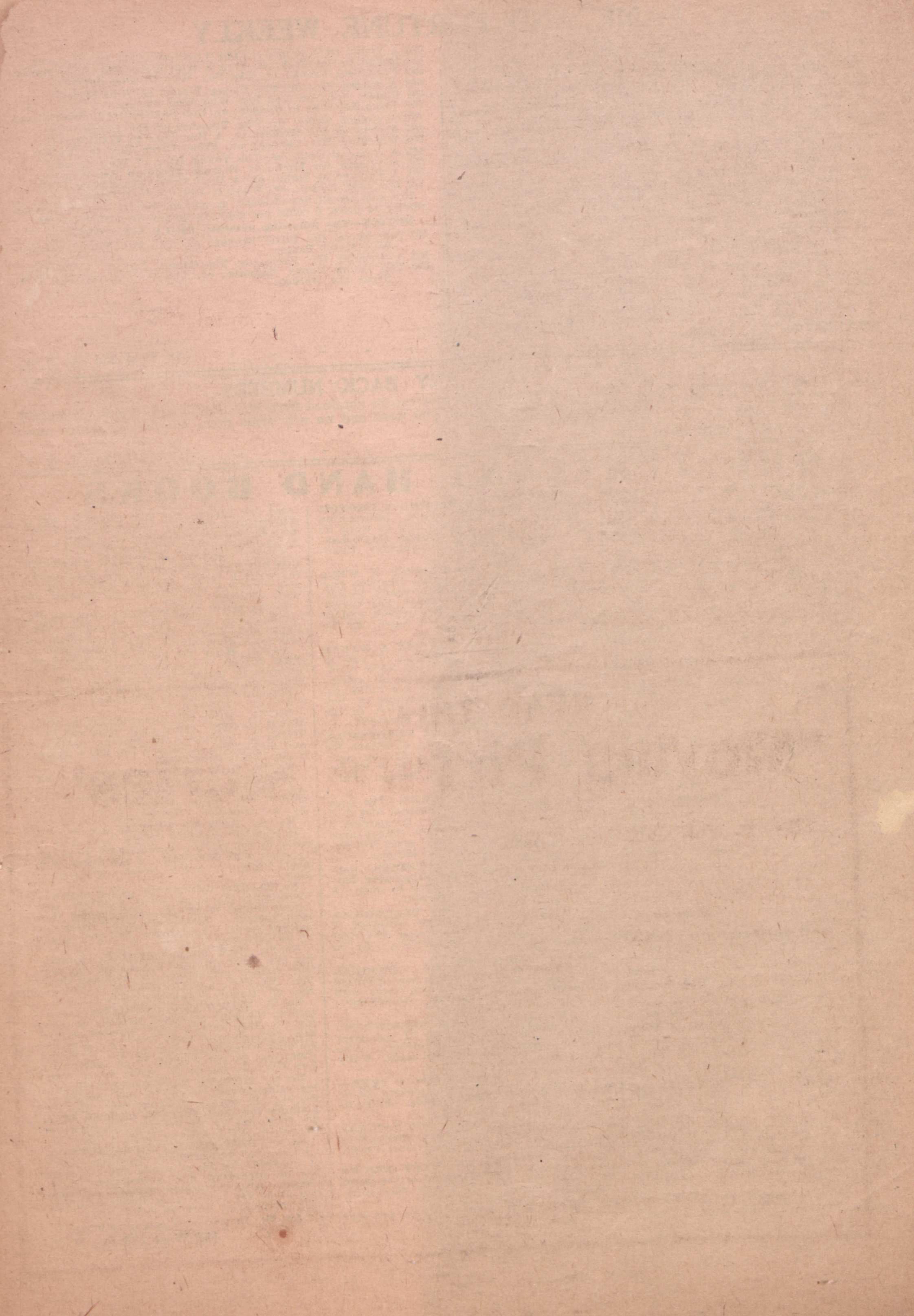
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